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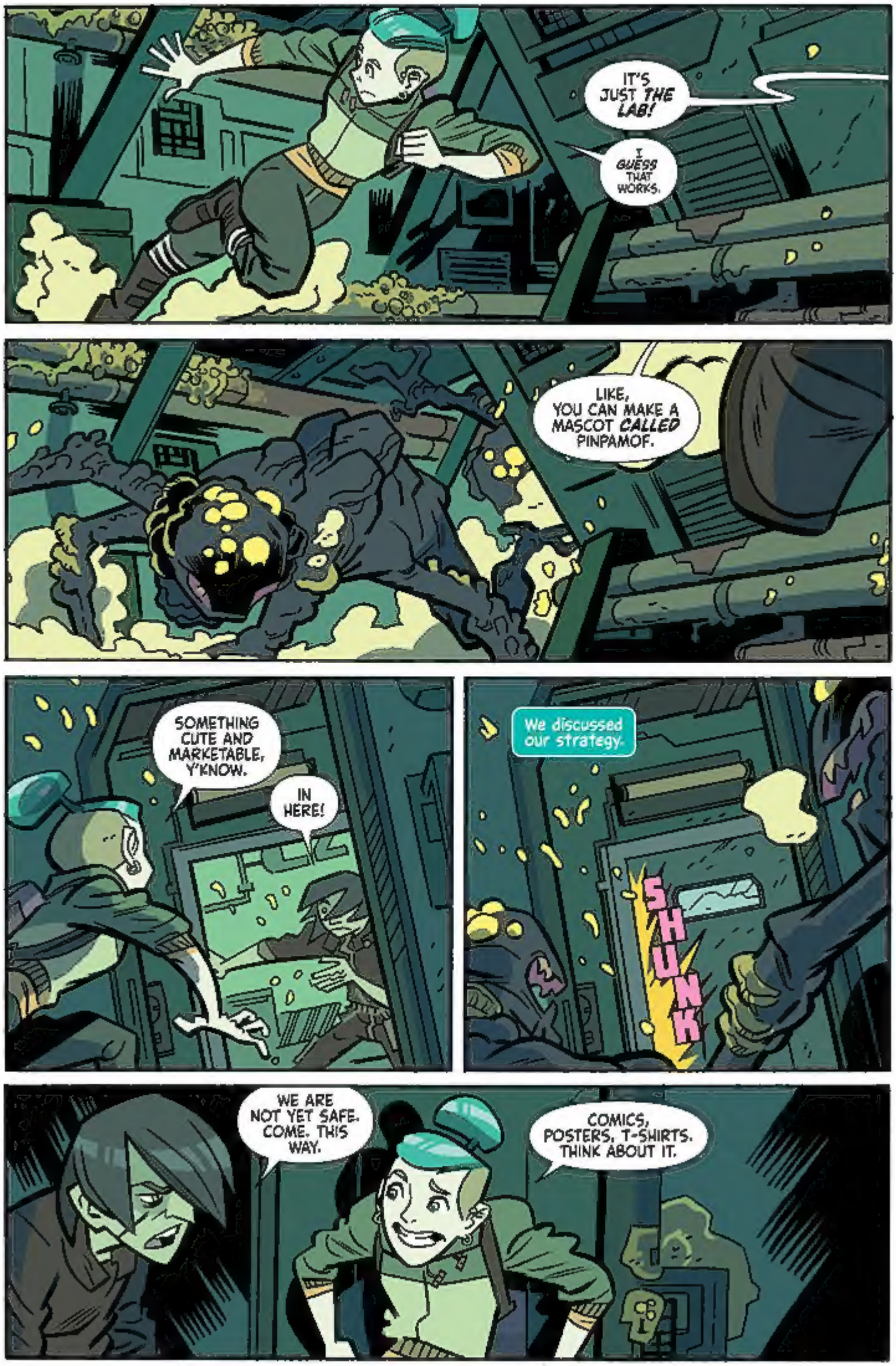
DARKEST OREGON, 2017
So, as you may not know, I was on a secret mission.
Checking old Tesladyne facilities after ULTRA went under.
Overcoming their perimeter defenses.
PRIVATE PROPER
NO
TRESPASSIN
Gathering intel.
Collecting gear.
SCREE
FUMP
Yup. Only one person could do the job and do it right.

Me.
Elizabeth Foley. Action Scientist.
ANYWAY, THAT'S THE JOB.
WOW, A SECRET MISSION!
NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT I SAID.
IT'S JUST EVERYONE'S BUSY.
SECRET MISSION.
Doctor Lang didn't even think about giving this secret mission to anyone else.
I'd been at it for a few weeks, but finally I was at my last stop.
The Pacific Northwest Phytopathology and Mycology Observation Facility.
Or "Pinpamof" as it's known.

Not gonna lie.
Inside? Creepy.
But I've seen some stuff in my day.
So, y'know.
Kept cool.
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?!
Even found one of our scientists!
I AM DR. MANN. DR. HUGH MANN.
His story totally checked out.
WE MUST LEAVE THIS PLACE. THEY WILL NOT BE LONG.
THEY?
FOLLOW ME TO SAFETY.
WAIT. YOU HEAR SOMETHING?
QWISH
SQUIK
BOB

And *that's* when I noticed the abundance of *mushrooms.*
HOW LONG HAS *PINPAMOF* BEEN ABANDONED?
NO ONE CALLS IT THAT.
Then the monsters happened.
THIS WAY!
THIS WAY TO SAFETY!
SO WHAT *DO* YOU CALL IT?
We secured an egress.
P-N-W-P-M-O-F?
THAT'S *NINE* SYLLABLES!
PINPAMOF IS *THREE.*
LIKE, HOW IS THIS *EVEN* A DEBATE?
The monsters were covered in the *same* mushrooms I noticed earlier.


IT'S JUST THE LAB!
I GUESS THAT WORKS.
LIKE, YOU CAN MAKE A MASCOT CALLED PINPAMOF.
SOMETHING CUTE AND MARKETABLE, Y'KNOW.
IN HERE!
We discussed our strategy.
SHUNK
WE ARE NOT YET SAFE. COME. THIS WAY.
COMICS, POSTERS, T-SHIRTS. THINK ABOUT IT.

WE ARE ALMOST THERE. ALMOST SAFE.
Y'SURE? 'CAUSE IT SEEMS LIKE WE'RE GOING *DEEPER* INTO THIS PLACE.

HERE. IN HERE.

Something wasn't adding up.
The enormous fungal brain thing in the room was a *big* clue.

Safe forever.
And the skeleton it spoke out of.
BOB

And Hugh's name tag said Bob.
BOB

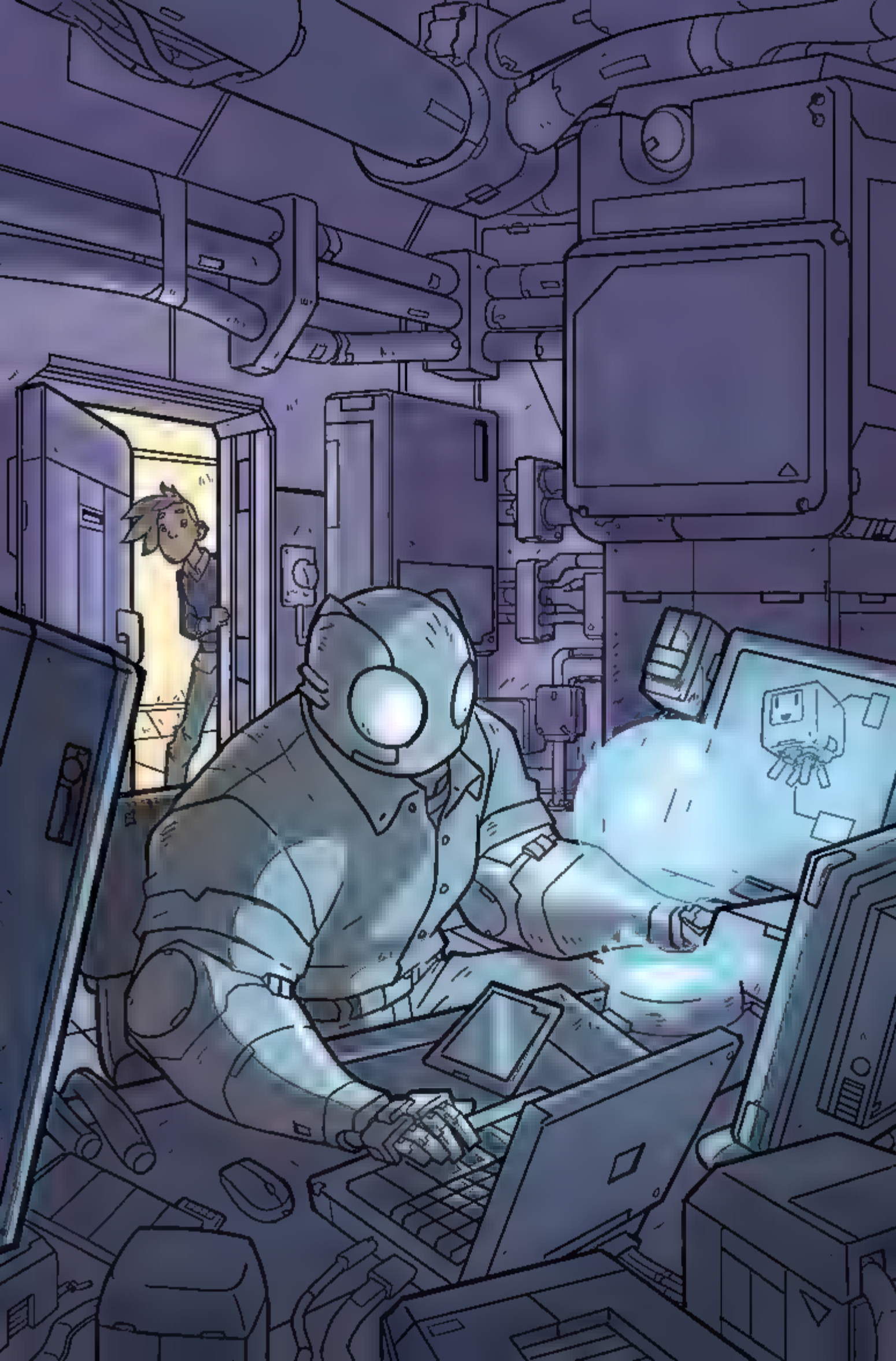
BOB'S DEAD, ISN'T HE.
NO WAY OUT.
JOIN US.
BE SAFE.
FOREVER.
AUGH!
I made a tactical decision to re-evaluate my options.
GROSS, GROSS, GROSS!
Nooooo!

GROSS!
I was out-numbered.
I'd have to make it to the access tunnels.
Where they couldn't reach me.
JEEZ!
In theory.
I kept my cool thanks to the traditional Tesladyne mantra.
DON'T CRY.
YOU CAN *CRY* WHEN YOU'RE *DEAD*.
KTANG
There's *always* the armory.
ARMORY
HOPE THE ACCESS CODE'S STILL GOOD.

Guns are good.
But I'd need more than that.
I'd need a plan.
TESLADYN
OFFICIAL
FLAMETHR
SHNK
SKREEE
SKREEE
FAWOOSH
SKREEE

NO, THE SPORES!
MY BEAUTIFUL SPORES!
JOIN US!

SOOO, LIKE...
...DO I GOTTA BURN EVERYTHING IN HERE?



JORNADA DEL MUERTO, NEW MEXICO, 2017

TESLA MOTORS GIGAFACTORY

TESLA

SPACEPORT USA

TESLADYNE INSTITUTE

FUTURE SITE OF TESLADYNE INSTITUTE

SKRSH

URGH.

KRIK

AMYBOBY HOBE?

GUESH MOT.

DA HEGK ISH--

AHEM. THE HECK *IS* EVERYBODY?

NEXT WEEK? THAT'S WHAT YOU SAID *TWO* WEEKS AGO.

TORNADO DEL MUERTO MOA

DR. ATOMIC RUBO TESLA

WE'RE TALKING ABOUT *TOILETS.* TOILETS ARE *BINARY.* THERE IS ONLY *FINE* OR *DISASTER.*

INCONVENIENCE ISN'T ON THE--NO-- *DON'T PUT ME ON HOLD!*

CLK

UH. DOCTOR LANG? YOU OKAY?

I'M ON HOLD.

AND *VERY* SOON I SHALL *KILL* SOMEONE.

I'LL JUST. UH.

LEAVE.

DOCTOR ABASI!

FOLEY! WHEN'D YOU GET BACK?

JUST NOW.

YEAH? HOW'D IT GO?

GOOD, GOOD. I *THINK?* I MEAN, IT WAS MY FIRST BIG--

GREAT, CAN'T WAIT TO READ THE REPORT. BUT LATER.

RIGHT NOW I GOTTA TAKE CARE OF THESE PERMITS TO GET *OTHER* PERMITS TO *START* THE WORK WE ALREADY *DID* SO WE CAN GET BACK TO *DOING* IT.

OH. IS THAT WHY THERE'S BEEN, LIKE, NO PROGRESS?

PARTLY. IT'D MAKE THINGS EASIER IF WE COULD GET ROBO TO HELP. HASN'T COME OUT OF HIS LAB IN *WEEKS.*

STILL? WHAT'S HE *DOING* DOWN THERE?

NO ONE KNOWS.

WELL, IN THE MEANTIME, I'LL JUST LEAVE THE MAIL WITH *YOU* AND--

NOT THIS ONE. *HOA* BUSINESS. ROBO'S EYES ONLY.

JORNADA DE HOA

DR ATOMIC R

LET ME TELL YOU HOW THIS IS GONNA WORK.

EITHER YOU DELIVER THESE TOILETS OR WE START GOING ON YOUR CARS.

I'M NOT THREATENING YOU, I'M NOT THREATENING YOU.

I'M *PROMISING* YOU.

CRASH

HUNG UP AGAIN!

AH!

SORRY, DOCTOR FISCHER. DIDN'T SEE YOU.

NO, IT'S FINE. YOU'RE GOOD. EVERY-THING IS FINE AND GOOD.

CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S JUST AS CLUTTERED AS WHEN I LEFT.

IS IT? PROBABLY. YOU WENT SOMEWHERE?

OREGON? FOR THREE WEEKS? MY FIRST BIG SOLO MISSION?

SURE, YEAH. *OREGON.* YUP. HAVE A GOOD TRIP.

UH, THAT'S NOT HOW THAT WORKS?

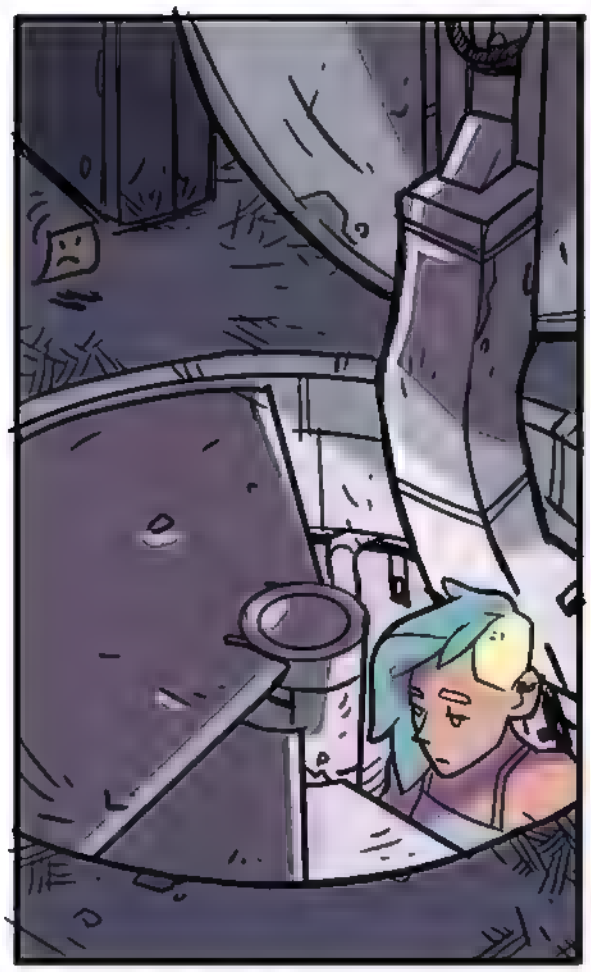
"FOLEY, SO GLAD YOU'RE BACK, HOW WAS OUR FIRST BIG MISSION?"

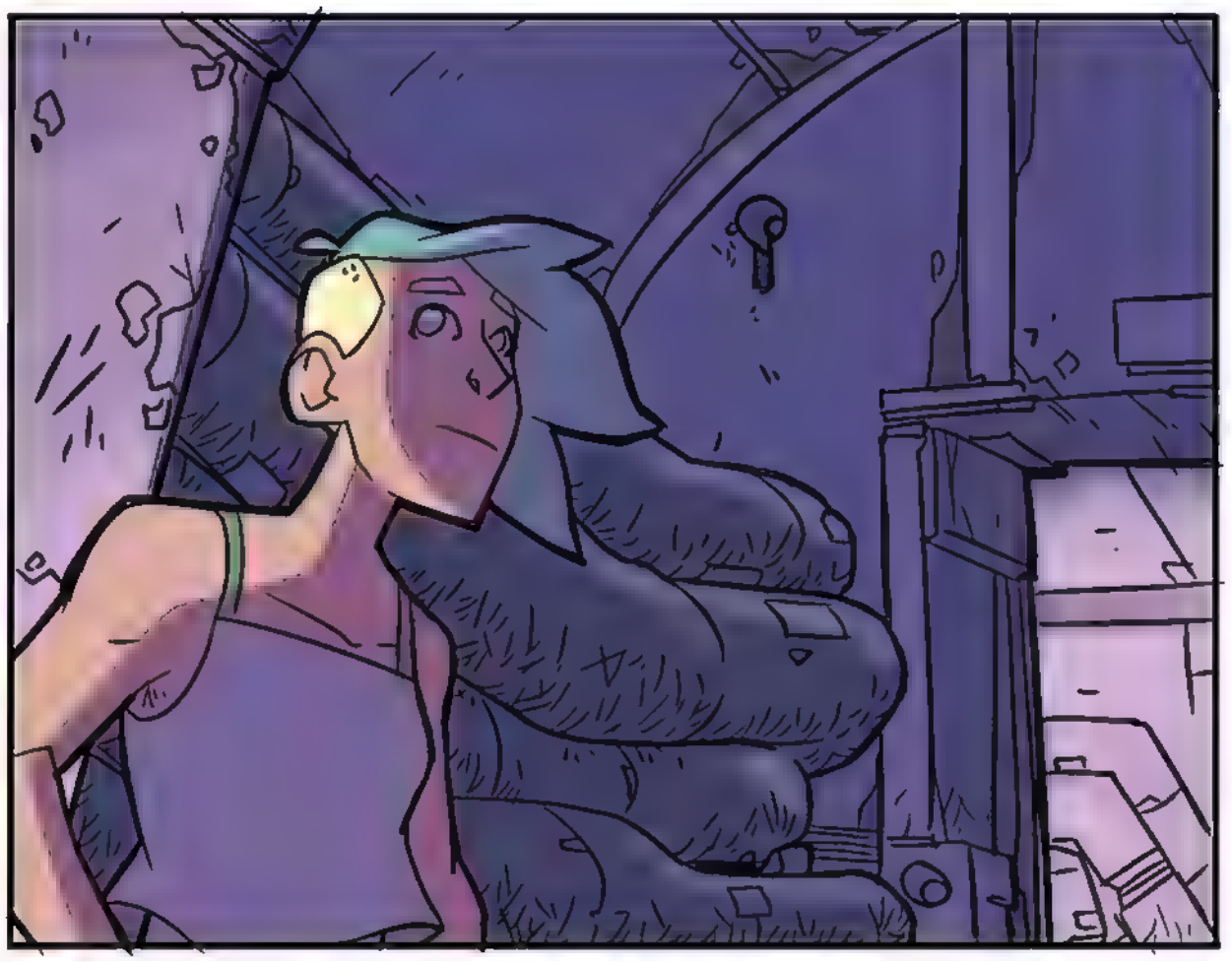
OH, Y'KNOW, DISCOVERED A PARAS TIC MEGAFUNGUS, PROBABLY SAVED THE WORLD. NO B G.

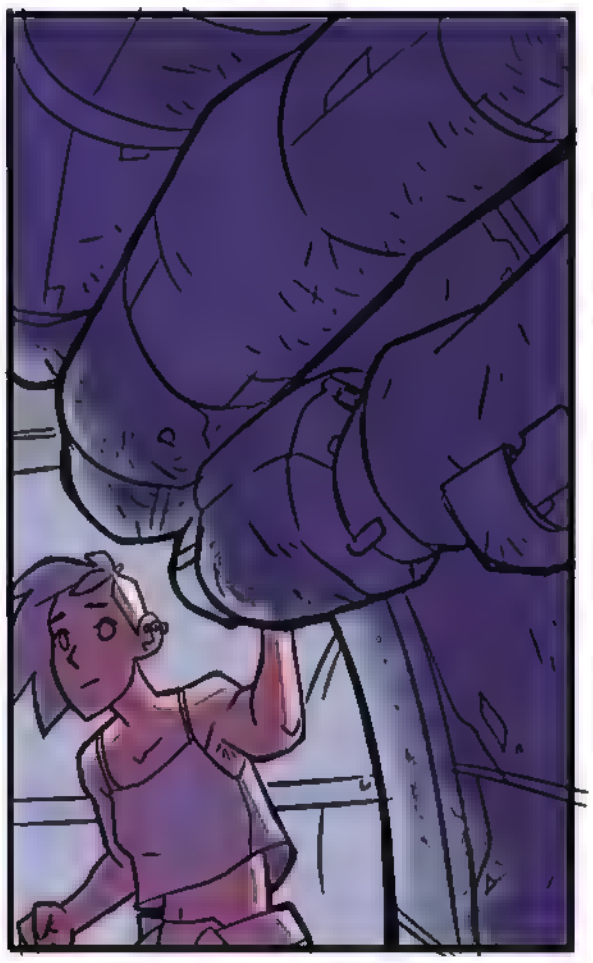
ROBO!

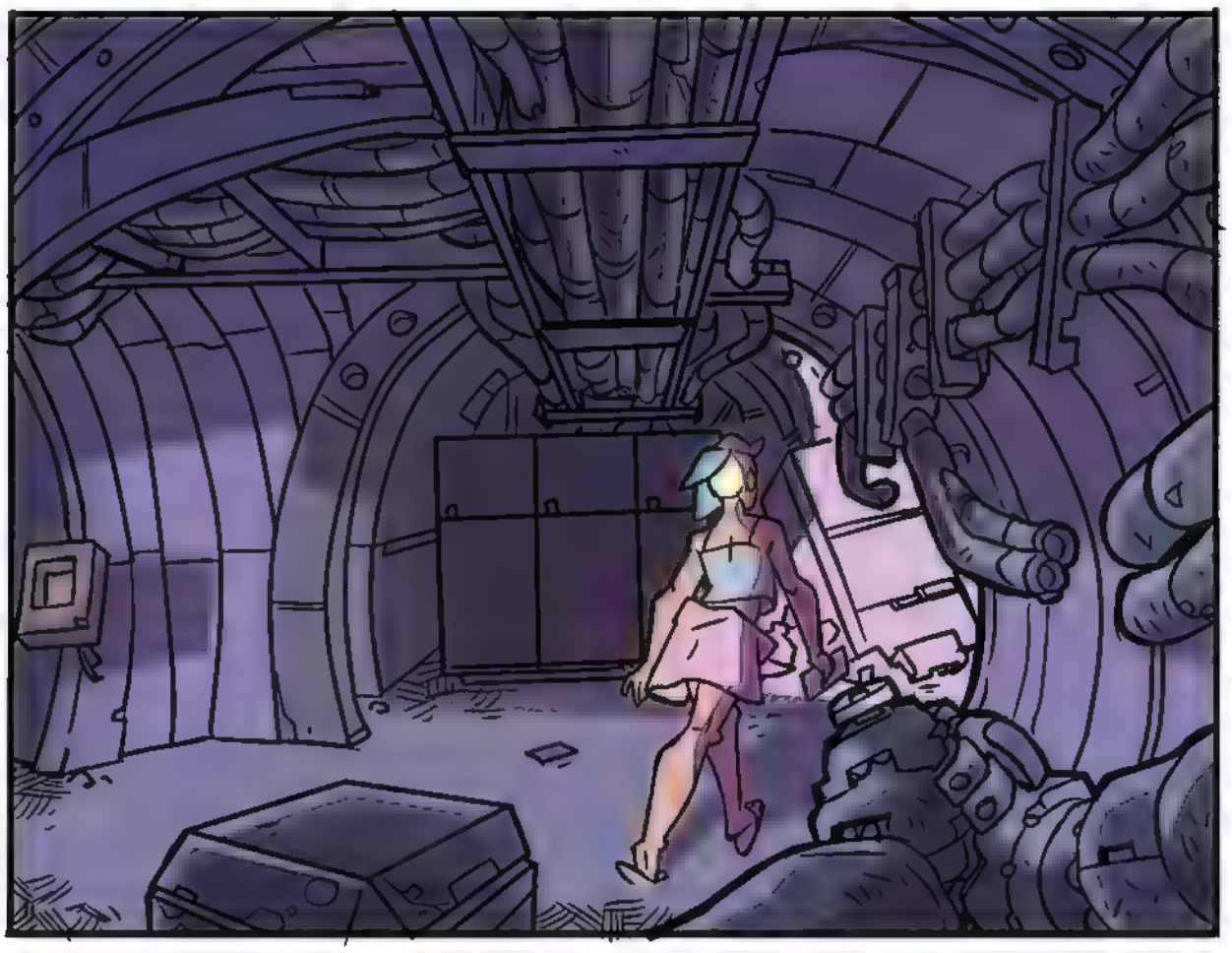
URGENT!

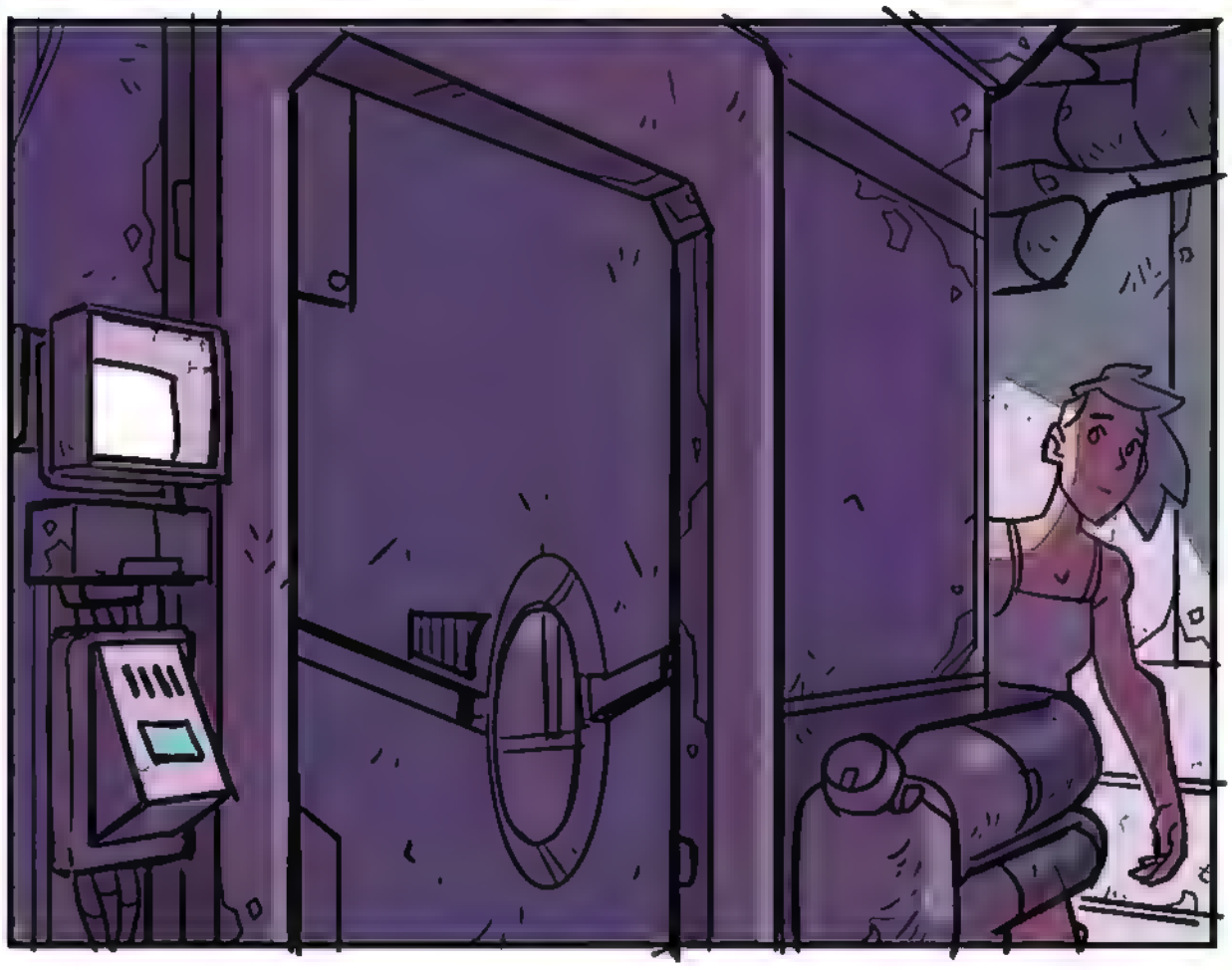
LAST NOTICE

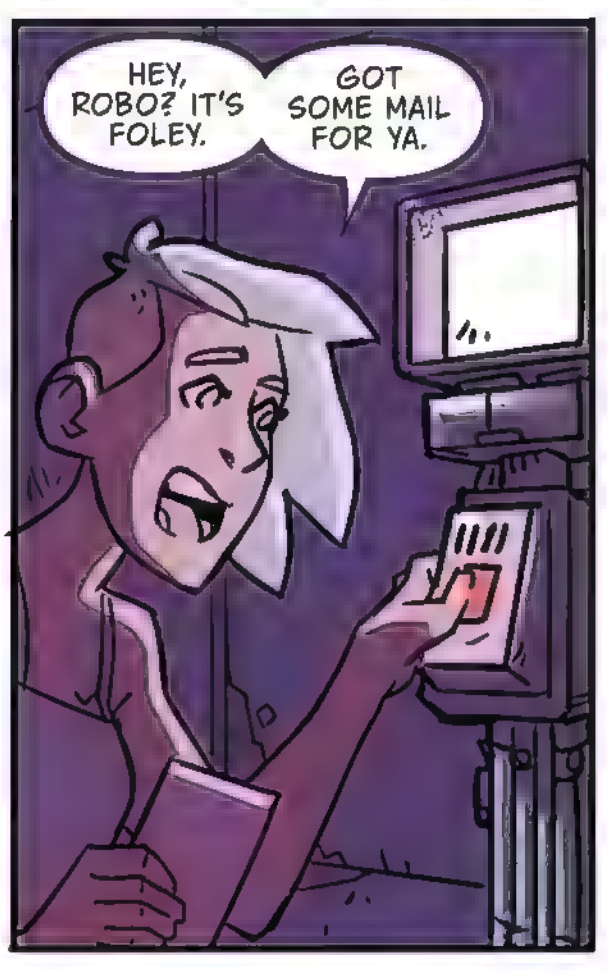











HEY, ROBO? IT'S FOLEY.
GOT SOME MAIL FOR YA.

UH. ROBO?

FWEET!

COME IN.

THIS WAY.

OH! UH, WHAT ARE...

UM. HI.

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

ROBO?

IS THAT YOU?

NOT EXACTLY.

PET PROJECT. WORKING ON A NODAL STRUCTURE OF AUTOMATIC INTELLIGENCE.

?

HEY, **HEY!** NO CHEATING. YOU ALREADY MOVED.

FWEE

BWAP

FWERNK

I MEAN, *TECHNICALLY,* HE DIDN'T TAKE HIS FINGER OFF.

UH, CLAW? GRIPPER? WHATEVER.

YEAH, THAT'S WHAT *THEY* SAID.

THEY'RE NETWORKED *TOGETHER,* AREN'T THEY.

THEY'RE ABOUT AS SMART AS A KITTEN ON THEIR OWN. BUT *EACH ONE* THAT CONNECTS TO THE NETWORK MAKES *ALL* OF THEM SMARTER.

SO, WAIT--WHEN I BROUGHT MORE IN, THEY THOUGHT OF A BETTER MOVE!

THEY DID.

THAT'S *AMAZING.* HOW SMART CAN THEY *GET?*

THERE'S NO UPPER LIMIT IN *THEORY.* JUST BOTTLENECKS. BANDWIDTH IS THE BIG ONE RIGHT NOW.

OH. UH. HERE'S YOUR MAIL, BY THE WAY. SEEMS IMPORTANT.

TOP SECRET MISSION? HOMELAND SECURITY?

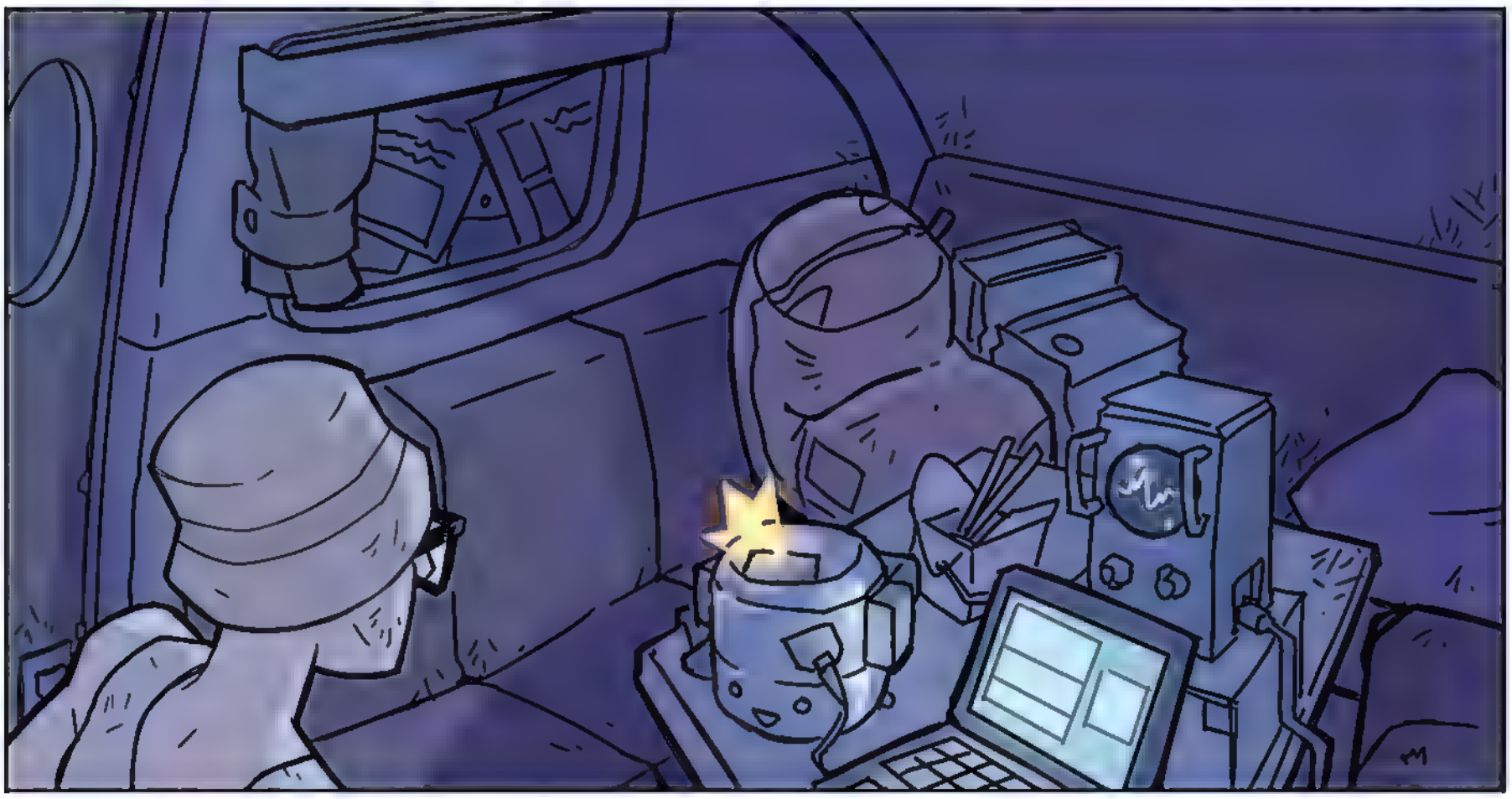
HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION.

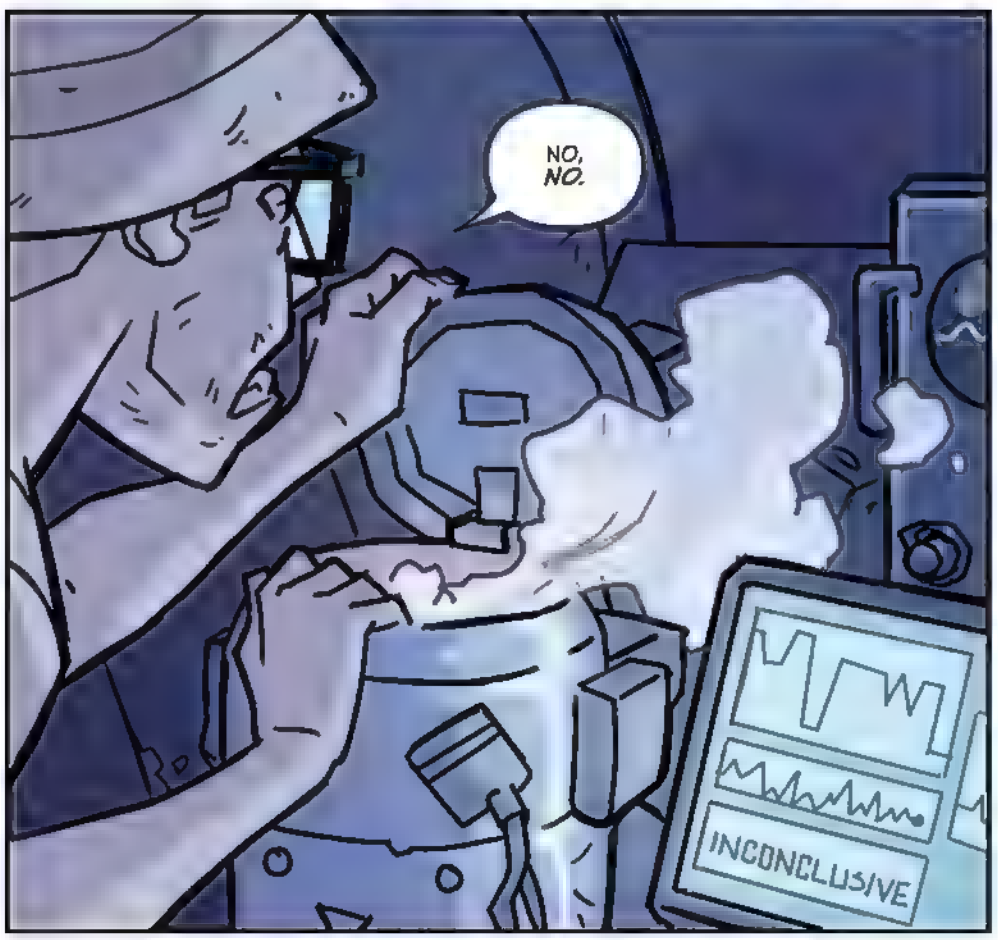
WAIT, SERIOUSLY?

ROBO?

I'LL SEE MYSELF OUT THEN?

HEY, DOCTOR FISCHER.
FOLEY. HAVE A GOOD TRIP?
FROM?
OREGON, WASN'T IT?
THAT WAS THIS AFTERNOON.
AND YOU'RE BACK *ALREADY?* YOU MUST BE EXHAUSTED.
NO, THAT'S NOT--
UH, ISN'T THAT COFFEE?
COFFEE? YES, I'D LOVE SOME, THANK YOU. HAVEN'T SLEPT IN FIFTY-SIX HOURS.
OR WAS IT SIXTY-FIVE?
I MEAN THE COFFEE IS *IN* YOUR CEREAL.
IS IT? SUPER IDEA.
I'LL JUST GO AND WRITE THAT DOWN.
WAS IT *ALWAYS* THIS CRAZY?




NO,
NO.
INCONCLUSIVE

IT
CAN'T BE
INERT!
I JUST WANT
TO GO BACK WHERE
I MATTERED.

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

International Conference on Systems, Man, and Cybernetics Presents:
Dr. Julie Walker
"Grey Matter: An Architecture of Man-Machine Interface"

"THE WORLD OF THE FUTURE WILL BE AN EVEN MORE DEMANDING STRUGGLE AGAINST THE LIMITATIONS OF OUR INTELLIGENCE."

THOSE WORDS ARE, IF ANYTHING, ***MORE*** TRUE TODAY THAN THEY WERE WHEN NORBERT WIENER ***FIRST*** WROTE THEM IN 1949.

AND THAT IS WHY I PROPOSE A METHOD TO ***NEGOTIATE*** THE ***TERMS*** OF THOSE LIMITATIONS.

LATER...

THIS SEAT TAKEN?

PHIL?

WHO ***ELSE*** WOULD USE SUCH A ***CORNY*** LINE?

I ATTENDED YOUR TALK.

GOOD STUFF.

FASCINATING, REALLY.

BUT I NEVER PEGGED *YOU* AS A *SINGULARITY* ENTHUSIAST.

NO? MY WORK ON MAN-MACHINE INTERFACES *LANDED* ME THAT TESLADYNE JOB.

SURE. BUT INTELLIGENCE EXPANSION? *THAT'S* NEW.

WELL, IT *IS* AND IT *ISN'T.*

IT WAS *ALWAYS* ABOUT USING TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE HUMAN POTENTIAL.

BUT NOW I'M SUGGESTING NEW WAYS TO THINK ABOUT WHAT THAT *MEANS.*

ONLY REVOLUTIONIZING A FUTURE INDUSTRY BEFORE IT BEGINS.

HEY. THINK BIG OR GO HOME.

THAT'S THE TESLADYNE IN YOU TALKING.

EVER THINK OF COMING BACK?

GLUG

NO. I *MISS* IT.

EVERY *DAY,* I MISS IT.

BUT NO.

YOU SURE? I GOT A SPIEL.

I'M SURE. IT'S JUST...

WE NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO DO THE *WORK.*

Y'KNOW? THE *REAL* WORK.

WE WERE ALWAYS PUTTING OUT *FIRES.*

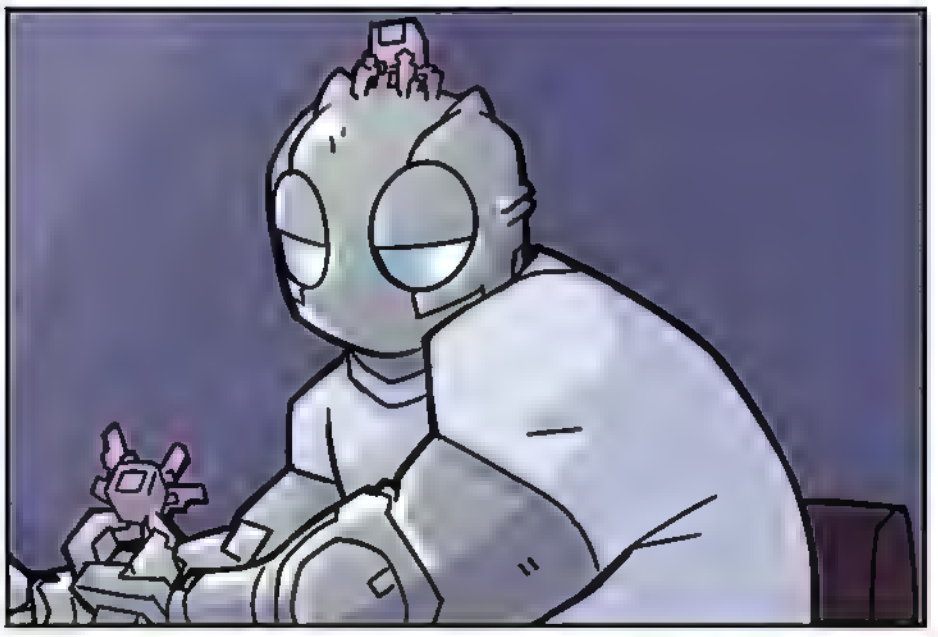
YOU'RE DOING THE REAL WORK NOW?

CLOSER TO IT. I GOTTA CHASE GRANTS AND DO CONFERENCES FOR FUNDING.

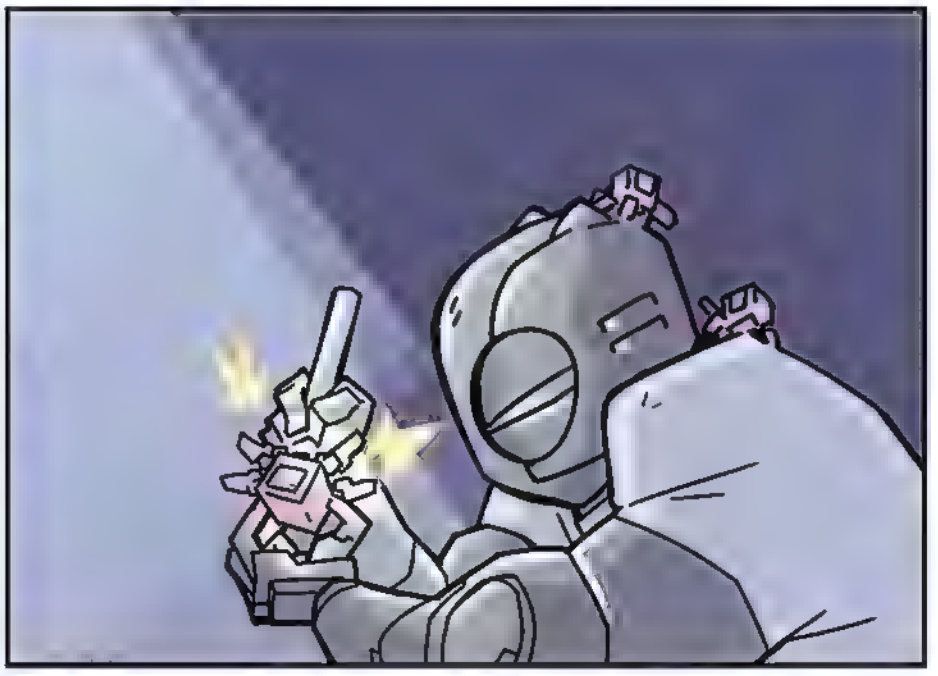
BUT I'LL TAKE *THOSE* OVER DINOSAUR ATTACKS *ANY* DAY.

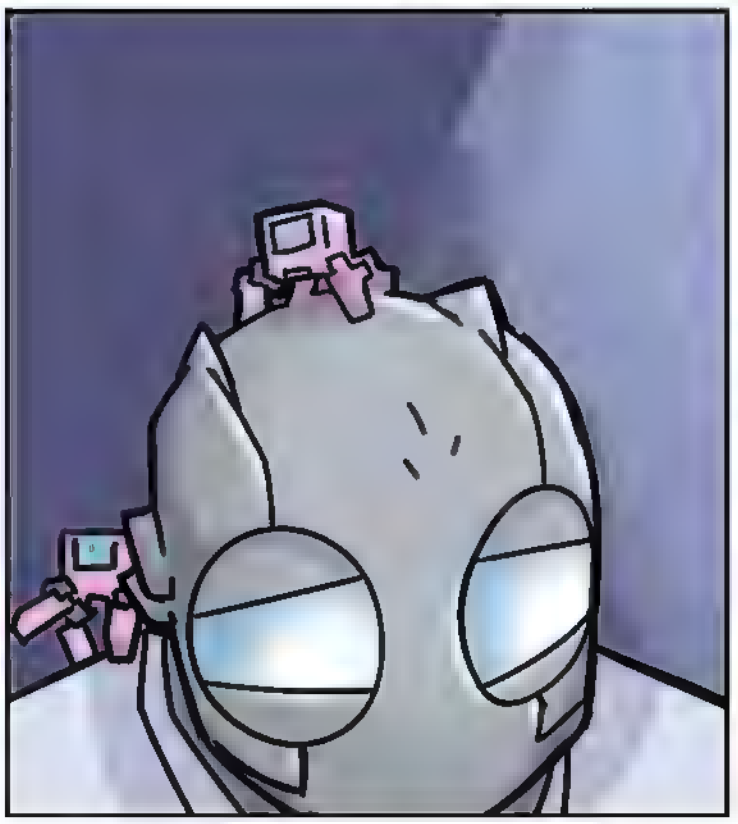
WELL. YOU EVER CHANGE YOUR MIND, YOU KNOW WHERE TO FIND US.

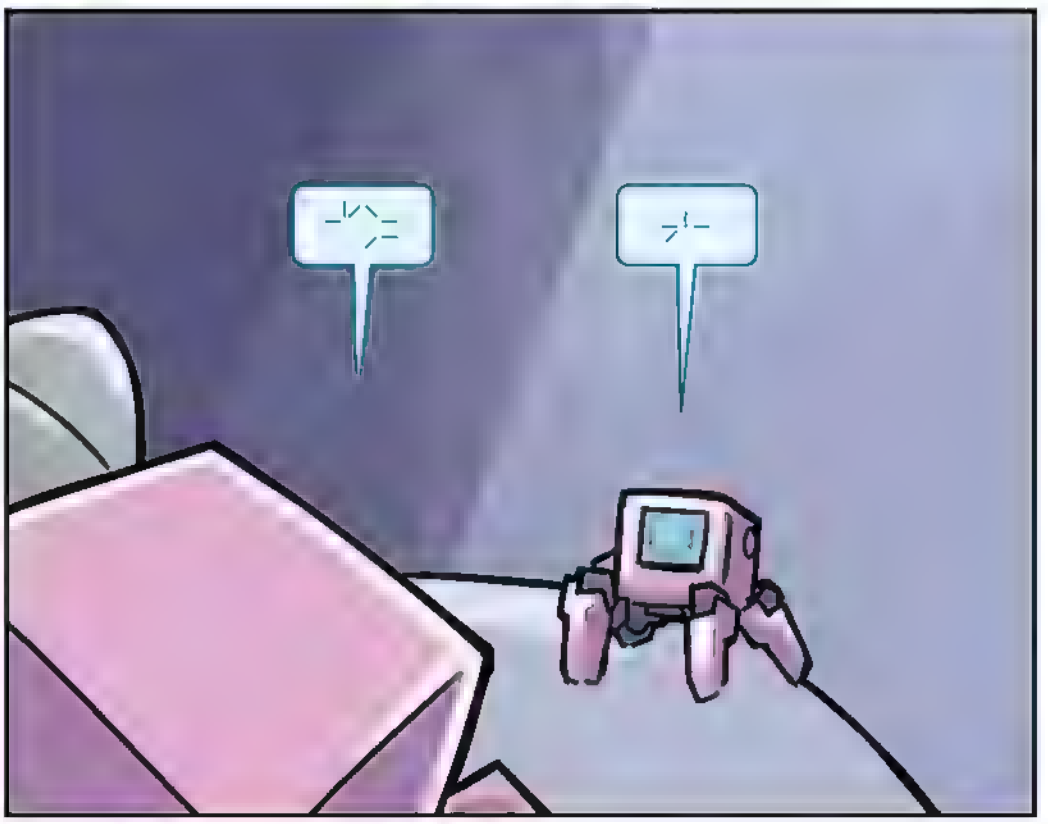
I DO.



Dr Atomic Robo







OKAY, FINE!

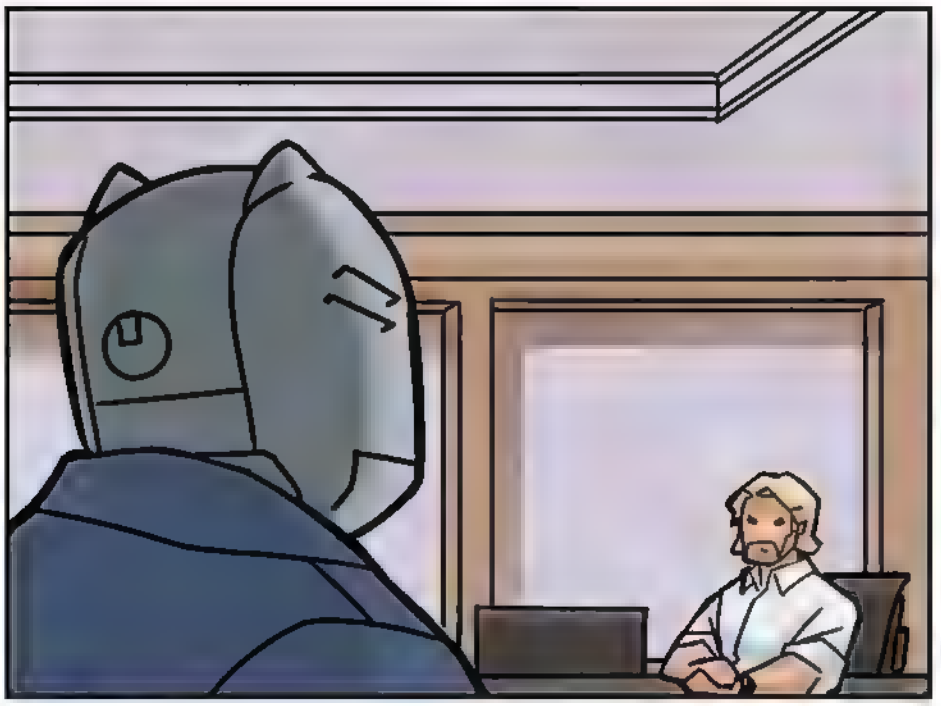
HATE IT WHEN YOU GUYS ARE RIGHT.

STUPID LOUSY DRONES.

ZAWT

STUPID LOUSY TIE.

Jornada del Muerto
Homeowners Association Meeting
2:00pm
Room 3B



THERE'S A HUNDRED AND THIRTY NOISE ORDINANCE VIOLATIONS ALONE.

SIX MONTHS OF DEMOLITIONS AND EXCAVATIONS ADD UP, ROBO.

NOISE COMPLAINTS.

FROM YOU.

FROM THE COMMUNITY.

THERE'S ONLY THE TWO OF US!

AND ELON.

ELON "I'LL BE IN CALIFORNIA UNTIL 2019" MUSK?

Y'KNOW WHAT? DOESN'T MATTER.

HOW CAN YOU CITE ME FOR NOISE VIOLATIONS?

YOU LIVE IN A SPACEPORT!

AND YET WE ADHERE TO THE CC&RS.

YOU SHOULD TRY IT SOMETIME.

CC&R

HAS IT REALLY BEEN SIX MONTHS?

NEARLY SEVEN.

OKAY. I ADMIT THERE HAVE BEEN SOME DELAYS.

BUT THE PROPERTY USED TO BELONG TO THE WHITE SANDS TEST RANGE.

THAT'S A LOT OF RED TAPE.

MY PEOPLE HAVE TO CONSULT WITH HISTORIANS, AND REGULATORS, AND SUITS FROM HALF A DOZEN D.O.D. AGENCIES.

AND IF THEY CONSULTED WITH THE CC&RS JUST AS THOROUGHLY, THEN YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE SUCH AN IMPRESSIVE LIST OF VIOLATIONS.

CC&R

YOU'RE REALLY STICKIN' TO THOSE, AREN'T YOU.

WITHOUT LAW, THERE IS ANARCHY, ROBO.

WHAT DO YOU WANT US TO DO?

IT'S NOT A MATTER OF ***WANT.*** ACTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES

GIVEN YOUR ***DISREGARD***--SOME WOULD SAY ***CONTEMPT***--FOR THE ***PEACE*** AND ***SECURITY*** OF THIS NEIGHBORHOOD...

...THE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO ORDER A ***TOTAL WORK STOPPAGE.***

WE ***CAN'T*** STOP. NOTHING'S ***FINISHED.***

YOU'LL RECEIVE OFFICIAL NOTICES IN THE MORNING.

GOOD DAY, ROBO.

YOU MIGHT HAVE ATTENDED ***ANY*** OF THE PREVIOUS ***HOA*** MEETINGS TO DISCUSS ALTERNATIVES.

YOU WERE ONLY INVITED HERE ***TODAY*** TO HEAR THE RULING AS A FORMALITY.

IT WAS GOOD TO CATCH UP.

IT WAS.

WAIT, WHAT TIME IS IT?

ALMOST TEN.

I GOTTA GET BACK TO THE CONFERENCE!

WHAT FOR?

ONLY THE *LOSER TALKS* ARE SCHEDULED *THIS* LATE.

MINE'S AT TEN-FIFTEN.

OH. UH. HEY.

I'M SURE IT'S NOT *THAT* BAD.

I MEAN. THERE'S ONLY SO MANY HOURS IN A DAY.

I'M DOING "ADVISORY BRIEFING ON NECESSARY SAFE-GUARDS FOR HYPOTHETICAL MINIATURIZED HUMAN IMPLANTED REACTOR SYSTEMS".

EXCITING.

IT *IS!*

WELL, THE INEVITABILITY OF PERSONAL SKELETAL-MOUNTED NUCLEAR REACTORS IS.

BUT YOU DON'T ***GET*** THOSE BEFORE ***SOMEONE*** DOES THE ***BORING*** WORK OF FIGURING OUT THE ***HEALTH*** AND ***SAFETY*** INFRASTRUCTURE ***FIRST.***

SO, ***THAT'S*** WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.

YOU WANT SOME COMPANY?

PLEASE.

AND WITH MY ***REMAINING*** TIME, I'D LIKE TO OPEN THE FLOOR TO SOME QUESTIONS.

AH, YES. YOU. IN THE BACK.

THANKS.

YOU RAISED AN INTERESTING POI--

=GHKK=

AHEM. SORRY, I--

=HRKK=

S'WRONG.

SIR?

TO BE CONTINUED...

WAT
NOPE
PERMIT
DENIED
PERMIT
PERMIT

SPACEPORT USA
NEW MEXICO, 2:24PM LOCAL TIME

AT LEAST THAT *UNPLEASANTNESS* IS DONE WITH.

*WE'RE NOT **DONE** HERE, BRANSON!*

EXCUSE ME, DO YOU HAVE AN *APPOINTMENT?*

*I'M STILL **IN** MY APPOINTMENT!*

NOT ACCORDING TO *MY* CALENDAR YOU'RE NOT.

JUST FINISHING UP HERE.

*KID, THE **GROWN-UPS** ARE--*

--HANG ON.

PHIL, NOW ISN'T THE--

SECRET ROBOT! CAN'T TALK! EVERYTHING'S TERRIBLE! CALL LATER!

*I'M **SORRY**, I HAVE TO TAKE THIS.*

I KNOW I'VE SAID IT ***BEFORE.***

SO DON'T SAY IT ***AGAIN.***

JUST HEAR ME OUT.

PLEASE NO.

I ***REALLY*** THINK WE'RE OUT OF THE WOODS.

THAT'S A JINX.

AND ***THIS*** TIME I'M ***SURE*** OF IT.

COOL. YOU JUST ***DOUBLE*** JINXED US.

THAT'S ***WAY*** COOL.

ROBO?

OUT OF THE LAB?

GET THE PAPERWORK!

STALL HIM!

ROBO!
HOW YOU *DOIN'*, MAN? HAVEN'T *SEEN* YOU IN A WHILE.
BEEN WORKING.
FOR SIX *MONTHS?*
IT'S A LOT OF WORK.
UH, YEAH. *WE'VE* BEEN WORKING TOO.
AND DOING A GREAT JOB. KEEP AT IT.
ROBO!
GOT A MINUTE?
NOT REALLY.
WE JUST NEED YOUR *JOHN Q. ROBOT* ON A *FEW* FORMS.
VIK, GIVE 'IM YOUR PEN.
LANG. I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS.
TIME? DUNNO IF YOU NOTICED, BUT WE'RE CAMPING OUT IN AN *ALMOST* FINISHED *GARAGE.*
BECAUSE *YOU* HIDE IN YOUR *CAVE* AND WON'T TAKE *ANY* RESPONSIBILITY FOR GETTING THINGS *DONE* AROUND HERE.
MAKE THE TIME.
FWAMP

CAN'T. SOMETHING'S COME UP.

THAT'S *IT*? THAT'S ALL WE *GET*?

"GOOD LUCK, SEE YOU IN ANOTHER SIX MONTHS"?

I KNOW YOU CAN HANDLE IT.

NOT LIKE *WE GOT A CHOICE!*

ROBO.!

ATTENTION

DON'T KNOW *WHY* WE HAVEN'T *QUIT.*

BECAUSE WE BELIEVE IN THE WORK.

BECAUSE WE'RE *IDIOTS.*

CERN HEADQUARTERS, GENEVA SWITZERLAND
11:06PM LOCAL TIME

<AND THEY'RE *EX*-TESLADYNE?>

<YES. DOCTORS WALKER AND BROUGHTON.>

<YOU'RE SURE?>

<THEIR **I.D.** CHECKED OUT, **BUT--**>

DIRECTOR OF CERN, INDIRA GULATI.

<THERE IS NO "***BUT.***" GIVE THEM ***FULL*** ACCESS.>

<IS THAT ***WISE?***>

<WALKER KNOWS MORE ABOUT HUMAN-MACHINE INTEGRATION THAN ANYONE EVER ***HAS,*** AND BROUGHTON IS AN ENERGY SYSTEMS ***WIZARD.***>

<I DON'T WANT THEM ***ON*** THIS CASE. I WANT THEM ***LEADING*** IT.>

<DEPUTIZE THEM INTO ***CERES**** IF YOU MUST.>

**CONSEIL EUROPÉEN POUR LA RECHERCHE EXOTIQUE ET STRATÉGIQUE*

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

DIRECTOR GULATI WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK WITH YOU.

WELCOME TO ***CERES.***

CERES

BACK UP.

OKAY, BUT HE SHOULDN'T *TOUCH* THAT.

LAB

D'AH!

VWRT

TOLD YOU.

EXCUSE ME.

YOU CAN'T COME IN HERE!

SHE HAS TO. SHE'S IN CHARGE NOW.

CERES

HIM TOO.

BUT *LESS* THAN ME.

TWENTY-SEVEN MINUTES LATER...

WE NEED TO KNOW WHO THIS *WAS.*

OR WHO HE WAS *SUPPOSED* TO BE.

FARADAY CAGE CHECKS OUT. WE'RE READY FOR TRANSPORT.

LEAD THE WAY.

YOU GOT THROUGH TO *ROBO,* RIGHT?

FOR ABOUT THREE SECONDS. I BRIEFED HIM.

CERES

THANK YOU.

CERES MOBILE

YOU *BRIEFED* HIM.

ABOUT *THIS.*

IN THREE SECONDS?

I'VE HONED AN *ASTONISHING* DATA COMPRESSION TECHNIQUE FOR DISASTERS.

JORNADA DEL MUERTO, NEW MEXICO
7:20AM LOCAL TIME

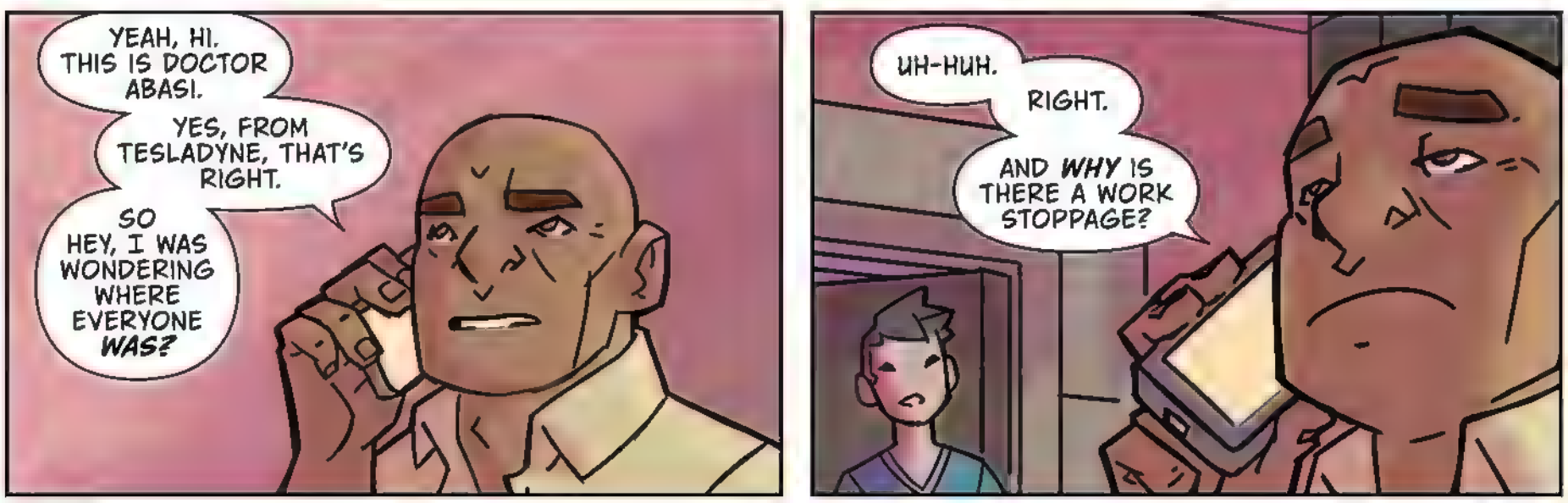
DEET DOO DEETLE DOO

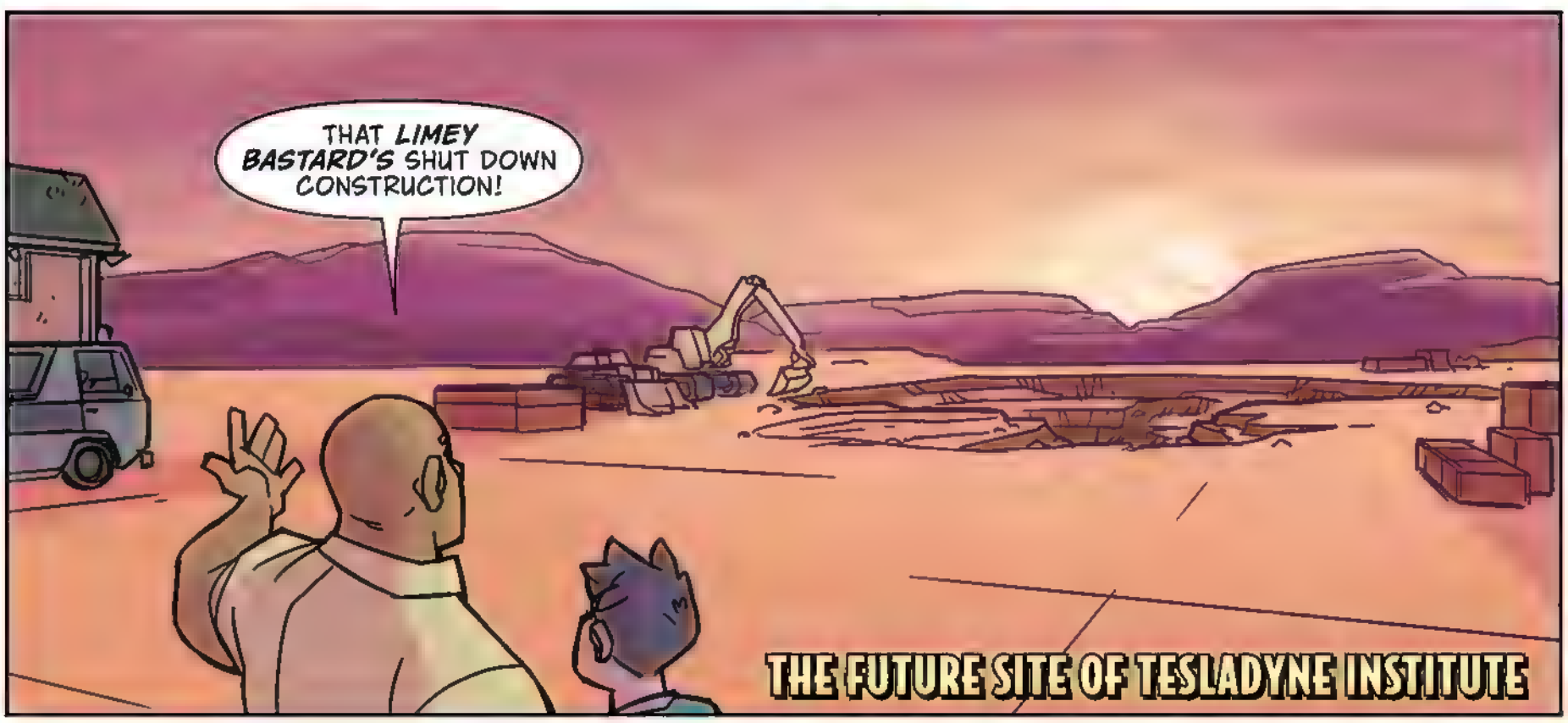
FSSHHHH

PERK! PTSHHH!

LANG WANNA COFFEE

HM. SHOULDA STARTED UP BY NOW.


YEAH, HI. THIS IS DOCTOR ABASI.
YES, FROM TESLADYNE, THAT'S RIGHT.
SO HEY, I WAS WONDERING WHERE EVERYONE *WAS?*
UH-HUH.
RIGHT.
AND *WHY* IS THERE A WORK STOPPAGE?


THAT *LIMEY BASTARD'S* SHUT DOWN CONSTRUCTION!
THE FUTURE SITE OF TESLADYNE INSTITUTE

SPACEPORT USA
NEXT DOOR TO THE FUTURE SITE OF TESLADYNE INSTITUTE

WHERE'S BRANSON!

EXCUSE ME. DO YOU HAVE AN APPOINTMENT?

MY BOOT'S ABOUT TO HAVE AN APPOINTMENT UP YOUR--

WE JUST NEED A FEW MOMENTS WITH MR. BRANSON.

I'M SORRY, BUT SIR RICHARD BRANSON IS INDISPOSED.

I'M GONNA INDISPOSE MY BOOT UP--

THERE SEEMS TO BE SOME CONFUSION ABOUT THE CONSTRUCTION ON OUR PROPERTY.

OH, THERE'S NO CONFUSION.

IDIOTS!

ANY LUCK?

HELL NO!

CRASH

WE LEFT A MESSAGE.

SO WHAT HAPPENED?

IT *APPEARS* OUR CONSTRUCTION VIOLATED THE NEIGHBORHOOD'S *NOISE* ORDINANCE.

FOR SEVERAL *MONTHS.*

AND BRANSON'S BEEN FILING COMPLAINTS. FOR *MONTHS.* AND ROBO'S BEEN *IGNORING* THEM.

FOR MONTHS.

AND *NOW* IT'S A CRISIS.

WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

THE *ONLY* THING THAT MADE LIVING LIKE THIS *BEARABLE* WAS THINKING IT'D BE GETTING *BETTER.*

BUT RIGHT *NOW* I GOTTA STOP LANG BEFORE SHE *KILLS* ANYONE.

OH. UH.

GOOD MORNING, DOCTOR FISCHER.

TIME IS AN ILLUSION.

NOT A REALITY. BUT A *CONCEPT.*

Egg

UH. YEAH. DITTO.

CAN'T *BELIEVE* THE ROBOT MAD SCIENTIST IS THE *LEAST* CRAZY PERSON HERE.

I MEAN, EXCEPT FOR *ME.*

BUT THEN, ROBO PROBABLY DOESN'T *TALK* TO HIMSELF.

BUT HE *IS* BUILDING AN ARMY OF WEIRD ROBOT FRIENDS.

HOW'D YOU GET IN HERE?

UH. *HEY,* ROBO.

HOW MUCH OF THAT DID YOU *HEAR?*

ENOUGH TO KEEP YOU NERVOUS.

I'LL, UH.

I CAN LEAVE.

NO, YOU'RE ALREADY HERE.

JUST FOLLOW TUPPY.

OF *COURSE* THE SPECTROMETER WOULDN'T WORK ON CRYSTALLIZED QUANTUM-PSIONIC VIBRATIONS.

BUT NOTHING CAN HIDE FROM A *TESLAGRAPH!*

STILL NOTHING *CONCLUSIVE,* BUT THESE NEWEST READINGS ARE *SO CLOSE.*

JUST A *LITTLE* MORE ENERGY.

ZZKRZZZEEERK

CERES BRANCH OFFICE
BUDAPEST, HUNGARY
5:02PM LOCAL TIME

ARE WE BEING *PUNK'D?* IS THAT STILL A THING?

NO. NO, IT IS NOT.

THEN WHAT'RE WE *LOOKING* AT?

SOMETHING *IMPOSSIBLE.*

INORGANIC

ORGANIC

MEISSNER FIELD

CARBON MICROFIBER NERVOUS SYSTEM.

WHATEVER HE'S GOT INSTEAD OF *HEMOGLOBIN* TURNED HIS BLOOD *CLEAR.*

CORRECT ME IF I'M WRONG, BUT *NO ONE'S* DOING WORK LIKE THIS.

NO ONE'S EVEN *TALKING* ABOUT WORK LIKE THIS.

SO HE'S A *LAMBORGHINI* IN A *MODEL T* WORLD.

BIGGER. THIS IS, LIKE, GOING FROM THE THEORY OF *FIRE* STRAIGHT TO THE THEORY OF *RELATIVITY.*

THERE ISN'T A *SHOTGUN* SOLUTION TO *THIS* PROBLEM.

POTENTIAL SITE OF TESLADYNE INSTITUTE
JORNADA DEL MUERTO, NEW MEXICO
12:13PM LOCAL TIME

THERE *IS.*

TESLADYNE OFFICIAL FLAMETHROWERS

EVEN IF IT'S *UNLOADED,* IT'S STILL A *CRIME* TO WAVE IT AROUND AND *THREATEN* PEOPLE.

WELL, *YEAH.*

IF YOU WANNA GET *TECHNICAL.*

ALL WE GOTTA DO IS *LIFT* THE WORK STOPPAGE.

COULD'VE BLOCKED IT FROM THE *START* IF WE'D KNOWN IT WAS COMING.

WE'LL TAKE THAT UP WITH ROBO IF HE EVER VISITS THE SURFACE WORLD AGAIN.

I'LL BRING THE AMMO.

I'LL BRING THE SHOTGUN.

BUT, OKAY, YOU'RE RIGHT.

WE *CAN* FIX THIS PROBLEM.

AND *PROBABLY* WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE LAW.

THESE GUYS ARE GOOD.

THEY LEARN.

YEAH? HOW DO THEY ***ORGANIZE*** THE INFORMATION?

OR ***SHARE*** IT?

AND WHERE DOES IT ***GO*** WHEN THEY AREN'T NETWORKED?

YEAH, DUNNO.

IS THAT... WHAT ***IS*** THAT?

I THINK IT'S WHAT PHIL MEANT WHEN HE SAID "SECRET ROBOT."

ALSO WHEN HE SAID 'EVERYTHING TERRIBLE."

LOOKS SORTA LIKE A SIMULACRUM.

I'M AFRAID IT ***IS*** ONE.

WAIT, ARE ***YOU*** JOKING? BECAUSE ***I*** WAS JOKING.

NOPE. JULIE AND PHIL FOUND IT IN BUDAPEST.

OR DID IT FIND THEM?

CAN WE GET BETTER PICTURES?

MAYBE? IT'S A **CERES** INVESTIGATION, BUT I'M **UNOFFICIALLY** CONSULTING SINCE PHIL AND JULIE GOT INVOLVED.

IT'S **UNOFFICIAL** BECAUSE IT'S **ILLEGAL**, ISN'T IT.

BIG TIME.

CERES TOOK THEIR PHONES, SO PHIL'S HIJACKING MY REACTOR'S REMOTE MONITOR TO TRANSMIT THIS DATA.

SICK CYBERCRIMES?

COOOOL!

IT IS **COOL. BUT SLOW.**

TOOK ABOUT AN **HOUR** TO GET A FEW PICTURES, A DOSSIER, AND SOME NOTES.

ADVANCED CYBERNETICS **ALWAYS** LEAD BACK TO DEPARTMENT ZERO OR DAEDALUS.

PROBLEM IS **DEPARTMENT ZERO** DOES INDUSTRIAL AND MILITARY GRADE HARDWARE.

MEANING NOTHING THAT COULD PASS AS NATURAL.

NOW, **DAEDALUS** SPECIALIZES IN DISCREET IMPLANTS. SENSORY EXPANSION. MINOR STRUCTURAL ENHANCEMENTS.

BUT **NOTHING** NEAR THE SCALE OR COMPLEXITY OF WHAT'S IN **THIS** GUY.

RIGHT. **AND** DAEDALUS ONLY AUGMENTS THEIR AGENTS.

Y'KNOW. **SUPER** DEEP UNDERCOVER?

WHAT IF HE **WAS** ONE?

WELL, THAT'S WHERE IT GETS WEIRD.

LET'S SAY HE WAS A MOLE FOR DAEDALUS.

IT'S POSSIBLE HE DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS A SECRET AGENT OR EVEN CYBERNETIC.

OH, MAN. THAT'S MESSED UP.

IT IS.

MAKES ME HOPE IT'S A NEW SUPER TECH CONSPIRACY JUST SO WE CAN TAKE THAT OFF THE TABLE.

IT ALMOST HAS TO BE A NEW OUTFIT, DOESN'T IT?

WE DON'T KNOW ANYONE DOING INTEGRATION ON THIS LEVEL.

EITHER WAY, WHY PUT SO MUCH IMPOSSIBLE TECH IN HIM? WHO IS HE?

SEBASTIAN TAYLOR. THIRTY-FIVE. SINGLE. NO KIDS. NO PETS. ONE SISTER. A FACEBOOK HE BARELY USES. NETFLIX. MINOR IKEA ADDICTION.

RIGHT. THE ONLY THING THAT'S ALMOST INTERESTING IS HIS JOB. TRAVEL OFFICE ASSISTANT FOR THE RAND CORPORATION

WHAT IF "WHY HIM" IS THE WRONG QUESTION? WHAT IF WE SHOULD BE ASKING "WHO ELSE?"

OH, THAT'S MUCH WORSE.

AT LEAST NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT IT YET?

KZERT

WHUZZAT?!

NONONO NONO!

TOKYO, JAPAN

LAGOS, NIGERIA

MEXICO CITY, MEXICO

PORTLAND, OREGON

SUP?

NOTHING

BORED

AL-JAZEERA UK
THE SHARD, LONDON

<CAMERA TWO.>

7:30PM LOCAL TIME

<SURELY YOU CAN'T BE *SERIOUS.*>

<IS THERE ANY *QUESTION?*>

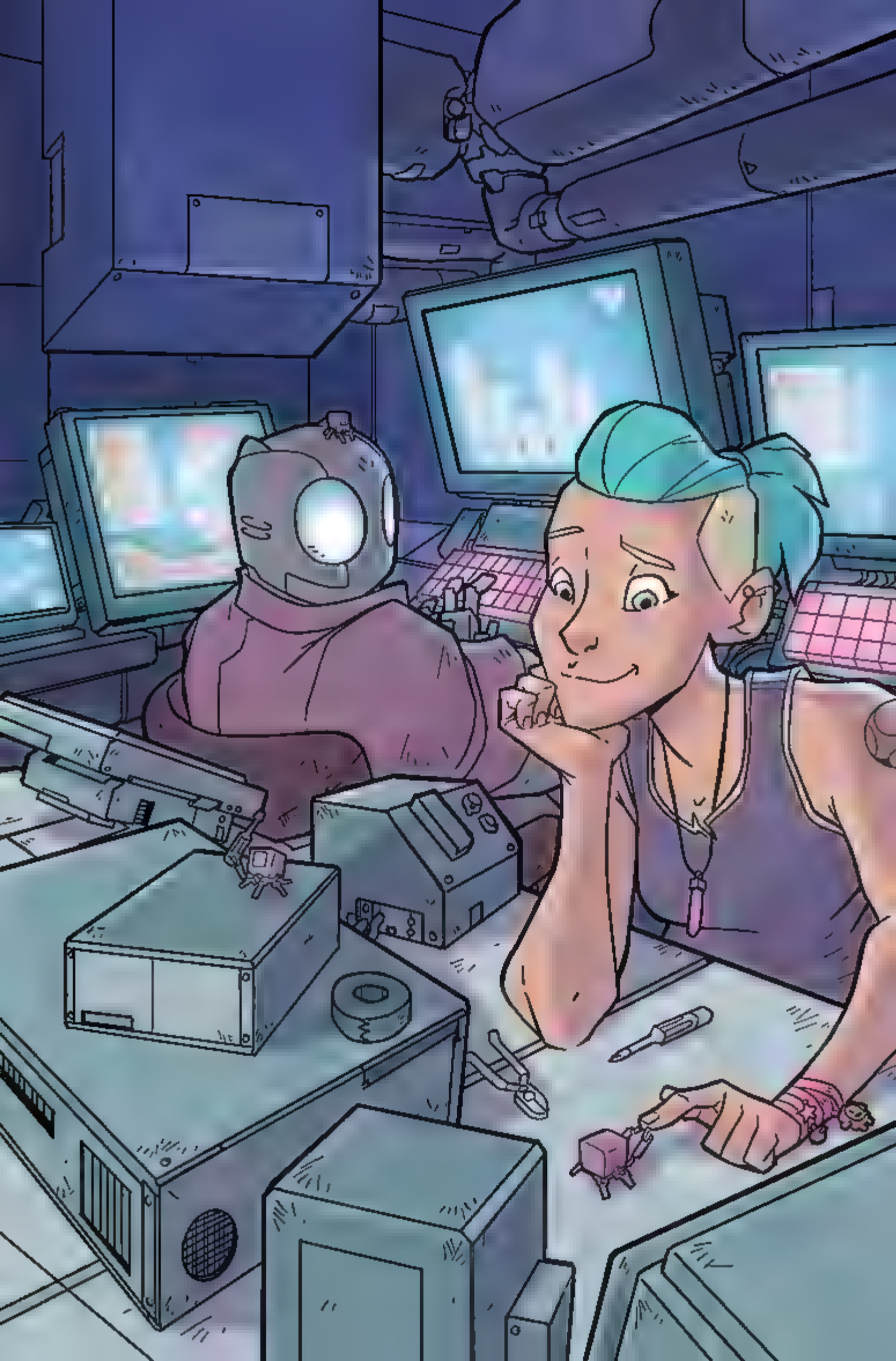
<*DISSENT* OF THIS DEGREE, THE *ORGANIZED* WAY-->

÷GHKK÷

<EXCUSE ME.>

<SHUT IT DOWN!>

TO BE CONTINUED...



AIRPORTS WORLDWIDE **SHUT DOWN** EARLIER TODAY AS **DEADLY BIOLOGICAL ATTACKS** WERE REPORTED ACROSS THE AMERICAS, EUROPE, **AND** ASIA.

CERES LEADS THE INVESTIGATION BACKED BY AN INTERNATIONAL COALITION OF RESEARCH AND DEFENSE COMPANIES.

RAYMOND'S LIQUORS

RGER

DETAILS ARE **SCARCE** AND **CONTRADICTORY** DUE TO A TOTAL MEDIA LOCKDOWN SURROUNDING THE INVESTIGATIONS.

WUT

EVEN SO, **ALLEGED** VIDEOS OF AT LEAST **SOME** OF THE ATTACKS HAVE SURFACED ONLINE, ONLY TO BE DELETED WITHIN **MINUTES.**

THE MOST **FAMOUS** OF THESE CONTAINS TWO-AND-A-HALF SECONDS OF AN ATTACK CAPTURED **LIVE** ON TELEVISION BEFORE THE BROADCAST WAS CUT.

ROTGUT SPECIAL! $$$

BOOP

BOOZE 4 WAT ALES YA

CERES OFFICIALS DENY THE VIDEO'S AUTHENTICITY **AND** WARN THAT SPREADING **ANY** MISINFORMATION COULD LEAD TO **SEVERE** LEGAL REPERCUSSIONS.

XXX

WHILE INVESTIGATORS **CONFIRM** THAT NO GROUP HAS STEPPED FORWARD TO CLAIM RESPONSIBILITY--

--IT SEEMS, **YES**--

--I'M RECEIVING WORD THAT DIRECTOR GULATI OF **CERES** IS ABOUT TO MAKE AN ANNOUNCEMENT IN BUDAPEST.

WE TAKE YOU THERE NOW, **LIVE.**

--KNOW AT THIS TIME.

THE EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THESE ATTACKS, THEY ARE NOT, STRICTLY SPEAKING, ***RANDOM.***

WE BELIEVE ***EACH*** VICTIM WAS ***SELECTED*** TO CULTIVATE AN ***ILLUSION*** OF RANDOMNESS.

DIRECTOR GULATI!

DIRECTOR GULATI!

WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE ATTACKS?

IS IT TRUE THIS IS AN ***AIRBORNE*** STRAIN OF ***RABIES?***

WHERE DO THEY ***GET*** THIS STUFF?

INTERNET. THE ***DEEPER*** THE BLACKOUT, THE ***CRAZIER*** THE SPECULATION.

GUESS IT'S THE PRICE WE PAY FOR PRETENDING THIS IS ***BIOLOGICAL.***

IT ***IS NOT*** COMMUNICABLE.

THE QUARANTINE ZONES, AND I REJECT THE TERM ***DRACONIAN*** BY THE WAY, ARE THERE TO PROTECT THE ***EVIDENCE.***

THEY ***WILL*** BE RELEASED IN DUE TIME.

YES, A NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ***ARE*** BEING DETAINED, BUT AS WITNESSES--

01010010010
0100100101000
10111000010
0010101010100

AAAH!

MOVE, MOVE!

OH, GOD!

DIRECTOR!

I'LL PING ROBO BEFORE THE LOCKDOWN.

<ORDERS?>

<FULL BLACKOUT. *NOTHING* GETS THROUGH.>

<AND THE JOURNALISTS?>

<QUARANTINE *EVERYONE*. CONFISCATE *EVERYTHING*.>

<SCAN THEM TWICE.>

WHAT *LITTLE* PUBLIC SANITY IS LEFT WILL *DISSOLVE* IF THEY LEARN *SOMETHING* IS TURNING *PEOPLE* INTO *MACHINES*.

WE'LL GET TO THE BOTTOM OF IT, DIRECTOR.

EVERY CASE GETS US THAT MUCH CLOSER.

I THOUGHT YOU WERE SOME KINDA COMPUTER WHIZ!

YOU FORGOT TO THROW "NEW-FANGLED" IN THERE.

OKAY, BUT IS IT WORKING?

YOU TELL ME.

PERFECT!

HOW'D YOU KNOW WE SHOULD LOOK FOR THIS STUFF?

PHIL TIPPED ME OFF.

IS THIS EVERYTHING? CAN WE GET MORE FOOTAGE?

VIDEO'S GETTING TAKEN DOWN AS FAST AS IT'S GOING UP.

BUT NOTHING'S REALLY GONE FROM THE INTERNET, IT JUST GETS HARDER TO FIND.

LEMME SEE WHAT I CAN DO.

TWO HOURS LATER...

ISOLATE THAT SECTION.

RIGHT, GOOD. SPLICE IT INTO OUR MOSAIC.

OKAY. **NOISE** FILTER. **NEWEST** ITERATION.

STILL TOO MUCH SCREAMING.

OKAY. PUT IT THROUGH AGAIN.

ANY LUCK?

NOT YET.

WE ISOLATED THE BEST SLICES FROM EVERY SOURCE.

NOW WE'RE TRYING DIFFERENT FILTERS TO BE **SURE** I'M HEARING WHAT I **THINK** I'M HEARING.

AND WHAT DO YOU *THINK* YOU'RE HEARING?

DON'T WANT TO SAY.

WHAT?

AFRAID OF *JINXING* IT?

NO, NO, NO!

I JUST DON'T WANT TO SAY ANYTHING.

NOT UNTIL WE'VE GOT SOMETHING CONCLUSIVE.

SORRY.

IT'S OKAY.

*BUT STOP TALKING ABOUT IT BEFORE YOU **DO** JINX IT.*

YOU *SAID*, "EVERY CASE GETS US THAT MUCH CLOSER."

I REMEMBER IT LIKE IT WAS YESTERDAY.

IT *WAS* YESTERDAY.

AND HERE WE ARE, *NOT* ANY CLOSER.

WHAT WAS I *SUPPOSED* TO SAY?

"WE DON'T KNOW *WHAT'S* HAPPENING BUT AT LEAST OUR THEORIES ARE AS *INSANE* AS THEY ARE *HORRIFYING.*"

I FEEL LIKE WE SHOULD BE *EMBARRASSED* THIS IS THE BEST WE COULD COME UP WITH.

DO WE HAVE *ANYTHING* LIKE A COMMON THREAD ON THE VICTIMS?

NOTHING. MEN, WOMEN, NON-BINARY, VARIOUS NATIONALITIES, ETHNICITIES, AGES, JOBS, INDUSTRIES. NO RED FLAGS ANYWHERE.

THEY COULD BE *ANYBODY.*

THEY *COULD*, COULDN'T THEY.

THEY'RE *MEANT* TO BLEND IN.

JORNADA DEL MUERTO, NEW MEXICO
10:01PM

LIKE, I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S *WORSE.*

THAT THERE'S A CHAPTER JUST ON *HEDGES* OR THAT IT HAS *SEVEN* SUB-CHAPTERS.

WHAT'RE THE CHANCES ROBO DIDN'T READ *ANY* OF THIS BEFORE HE SIGNED OFF ON IT?

GONNA GO WITH *TWO HUNDRED PERCENT.*

DOESN'T MATTER. HE DID WHAT HE DID AND HERE WE ARE.

YEAH, CLEANIN' UP *HIS* MESS SO WE CAN GET CONSTRUCTION STARTED UP AGAIN.

PLACING BLAME *RIGHT WHERE IT BELONGS* DOESN'T FIX IT.

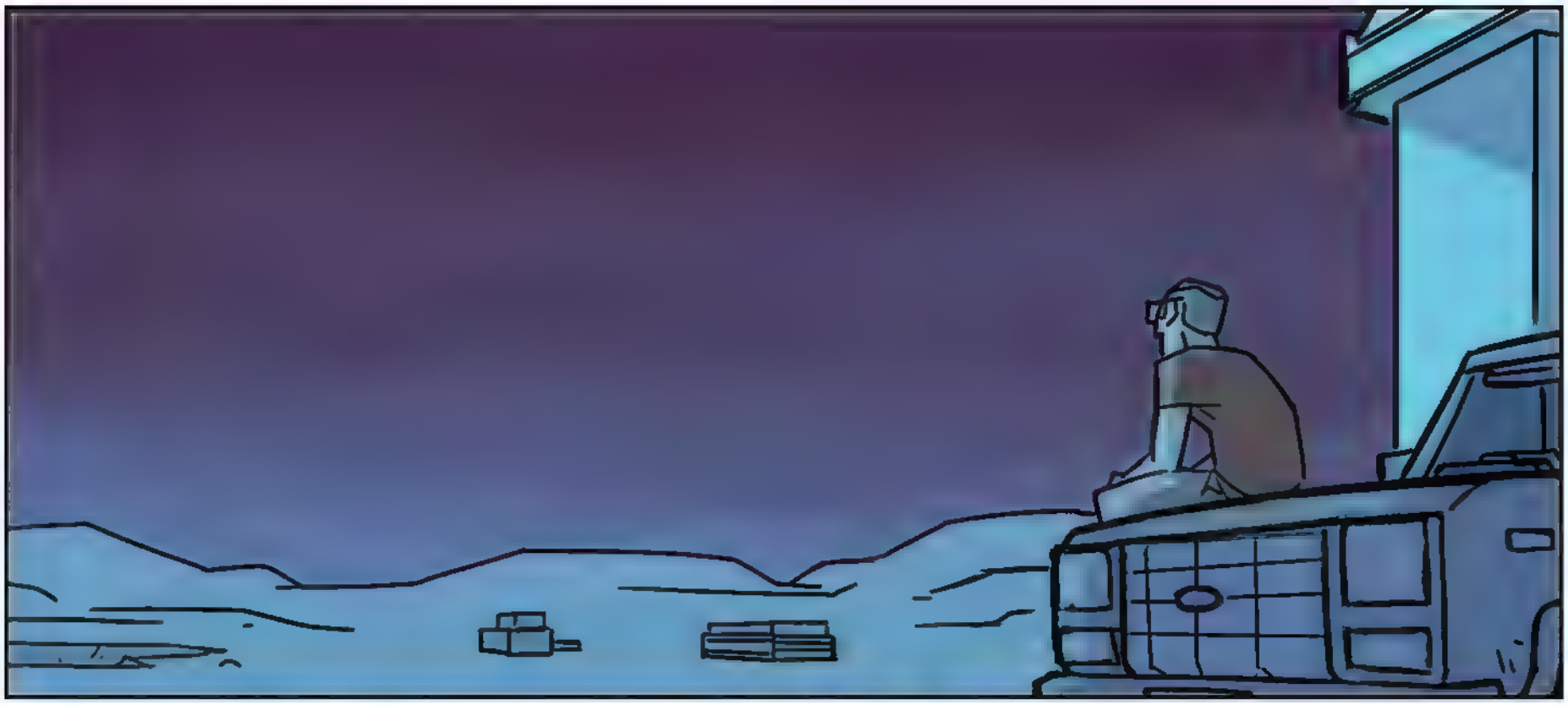
FEELS GOOD THOUGH.

YEAH IT *DOES.*

ARE WE JUST WASTING OUR TIME HERE?

SO FAR, THIS THING'S AIRTIGHT ENOUGH TO USE AS A *SPACESUIT.*

BUT FINDING A *LOOPHOLE* IS OUR BEST SHOT TO GET OUT OF THE WORK STOPPAGE.



HOLD STILL.

PERFECT.

OKAY. DON'T MOVE.

I GOT IT!

REALLY HAPPY FOR YOU, ROBO.

I WAS RIGHT!

THE VICTIMS OF EACH INCIDENT EMIT A WEIRD NOISE JUST BEFORE EVERYTHING GOES AWFUL.

ROBO? HEADPHONES?

THE RECORDINGS ARE **TERRIBLE** BUT ONCE YOU FILTER THE DISTORTION IT **PERFECTLY** MATCHES THE **OMAHA 3-NOTE!**

GREAT. REALLY, REALLY GREAT.

BUT ALSO, WHAT *IS* THAT?

IT'S **ALAN.**

OH, RIGHT.

THAT WEIRD SECRET **A.I.** ON THE WEIRD SECRET **ISLAND** WE USED TO REBUILD YOUR WEIRD SECRET **HEART?**

RIGHT. OMAHA 3-NOTE WAS HOW WE TRACKED **ALAN** TO HASHIMA ISLAND IN THE FIRST PLACE.

HE TURNED THE ENTIRE **ISLAND** INTO A GIANT **SPACESHIP** FUELED BY NUKES HE **HIJACKED** FROM **BOTH** SIDES OF THE COLD WAR.

I DEACTIVATED **ALAN,** BUT **THEN** THE AUTHORITIES FOUND **ME** SITTING ON A **STOCKPILE** OF STOLEN NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

WE COULDN'T RISK THEM DISCOVERING **ALAN'S** TECH, SO I TOOK THE HEAT AND FIGURED IT'D BLOW OVER EVENTUALLY SINCE, Y'KNOW, I **DIDN'T** STEAL THEM.

SO, **OKAY,** THIS OMAHA 3-NOTE THING MEANS **ALAN'S** BEHIND THESE CYBORG FREAKOUTS RIGHT?

ARE THEY SUPPOSED TO BE SOME SORT OF **ATTACK?**

MAYBE, BUT I'M NOT SURE **HOW.**

UNLESS THEY'RE MALFUNCTIONING?

SHACK

EITHER WAY, WE KNOW **ALAN'S** BEHIND IT AND IT'S GETTING **WORSE.**

WE'VE **GOT** TO STOP IT.

DEFINITELY!

SHOULD WE CALL **CERES** DIRECTLY OR SHOOT IT OVER TO PHIL IN CASE HE CAN GET THEM TO ACT ON IT FASTER?

WE'RE NOT TELLING **ANYONE** BECAUSE WE CAN'T RISK THEM GETTING THEIR HANDS ON **ALAN.**

I'M GOING BACK TO HASHIMA AND I'M **NOT LEAVING** UNTIL THERE'S **NOTHING** LEFT.

UHHH, HOW'S ***THAT*** WORK?

ALAN TURNED HASHIMA INTO A KILOMETER-LONG ORBITAL FACTORY WITH A **PROGRAMMABLE** INTERNAL STRUCTURE.

IT'S A TRANSFORMABLE FACTORY THAT CAN BUILD **ANYTHING,** INCLUDING **MORE** GIANT FACTORIES.

ALAN WAS GOING TO MAKE A **FLEET** OF THESE THINGS AND TURN THE ENTIRE SOLAR SYSTEM INTO A DYSON SPHERE.

I'M GOING TO PROGRAM IT TO TEAR ITSELF **APART.**

UH, COOL.

BUT I MEANT HOW ARE YOU GOING TO ***GET*** THERE?

OKAY. *CHAPTER* FOUR, SUB-CHAPTER *NINE*, SECTION *SIX*, SUB-SECTION *B*. SPRINKLER SYSTEMS!

I *THINK* WE CAN STRETCH THE LANGUAGE HERE TO GET *WORKING TOILETS.*

UM. HOW?

IT'S A *WILD* RIDE AND IT STARTS WITH *OUTDOOR* TOILETS.

LJX475

HEY!

FORD

LJX476

CAN'T A GUY STARE INTO THE SWIRLING ABYSS IN *PEACE?*

ARE THESE GUNS?

CHUK

WE'RE STEALING ONE OF BRANSON'S PLANES TO GET BACK TO HASHIMA AND STOP **ALAN** BEFORE HE KICKS OFF WORLD WAR 3 WITH HIS SECRET CYBORG army.

WE HAVE *GOT* TO START GETTING THE *INTERNET* OUT HERE.

WANNA HELP?

IS IT *DANGEROUS?*

EXCESSIVELY.

THEN WAKE ME WHEN I'M DEAD.

I *GUESS* THAT'S A *YES?*

SPACEPORT USA, NEXT-DOOR TO THE FUTURE SITE OF TESLADYNE INSTITUTE

YES, HELLO.

SIR RICHARD BRANSON WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT *YOU'RE* DOING WITH *HIS* PLANE.

SORRY, **NEIGHBOR**, ATOMIC ROBO JUST NEEDS TO BORROW IT FOR A WHILE.

KRAK

THINK HE'LL COME AFTER US?

HIS **LAWYERS** WILL.

GET SOME REST BEFORE THE BOOST.

60,000 FT.

PAK

PAK

THE BOOST

STARTING FEATHERED REENTRY.

HASHIMA ISLAND, JAPAN
9:58AM

ANYTHING COULD BE OUT THERE, SO STAY SHARP.

KRAKTCHOOM

APPLESAUCE.

OH, NO.

NOT LIKE THIS.

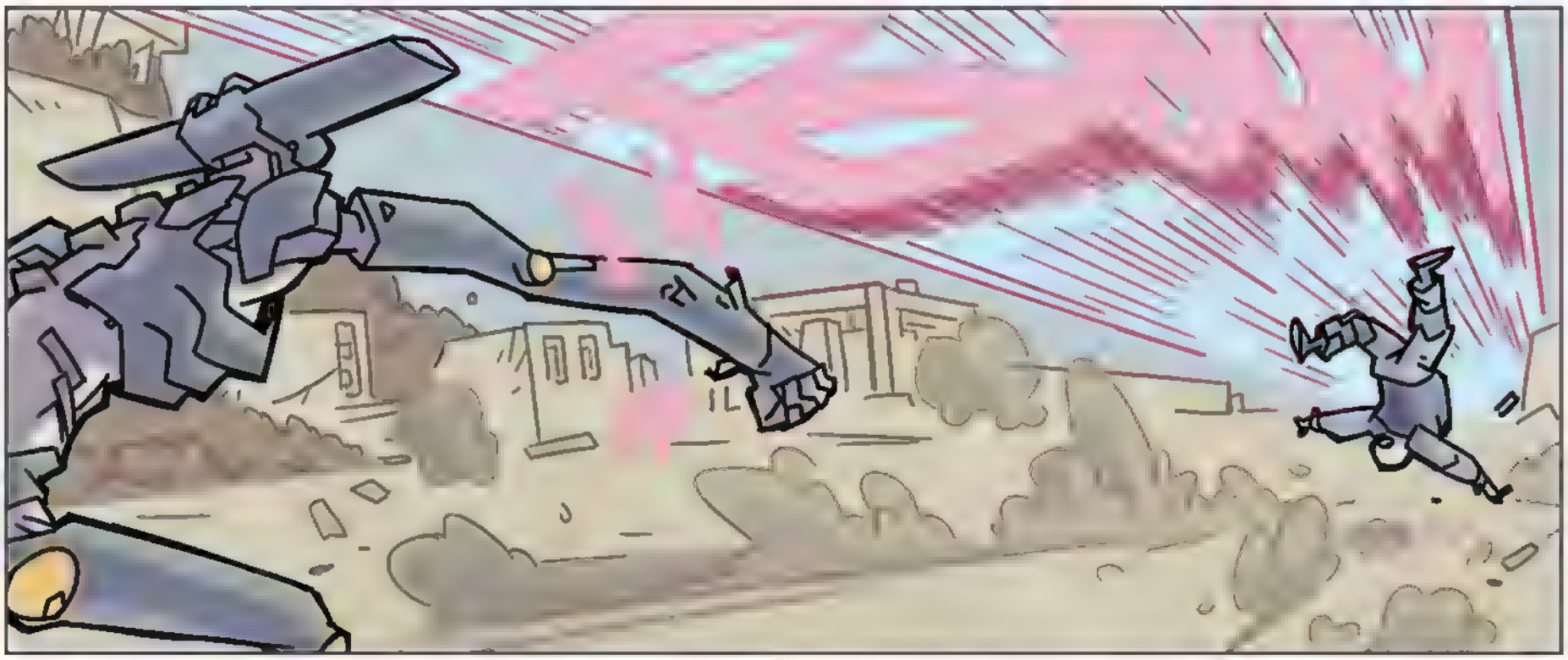
WHY, OH WHY?

C'MON!

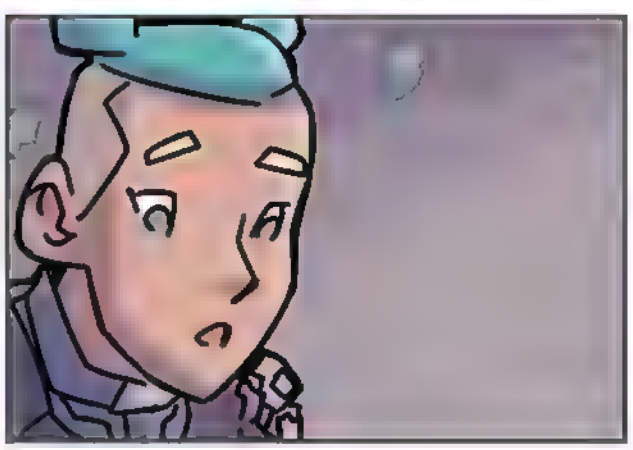
KLCKITY CHK

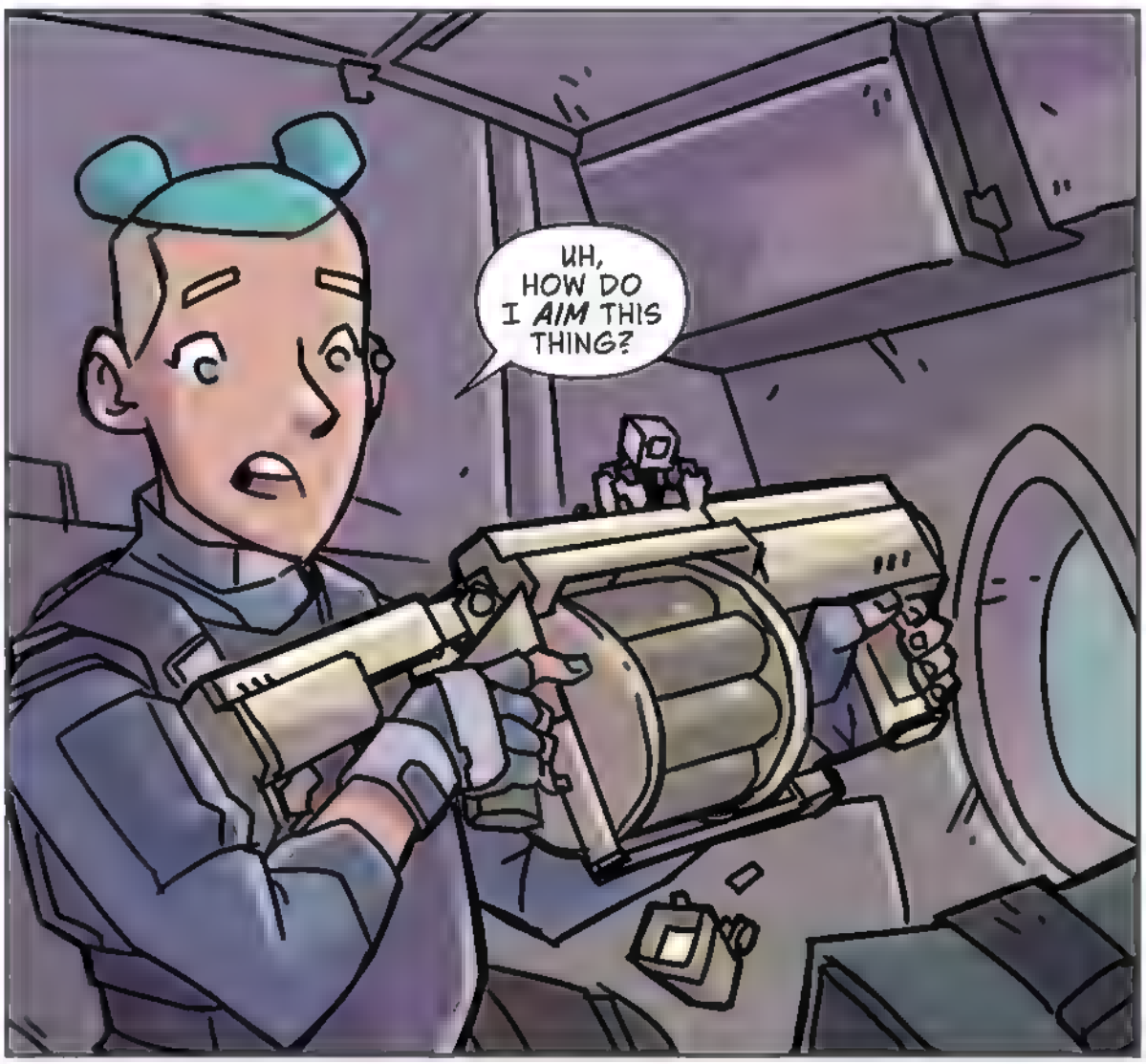
YOU AND ME, FREAK-O.

GUNS!



HEY!
KTAK




UH, HOW DO I *AIM* THIS THING?

WHY DON'T I HAVE A ROCKET PUNCH?

KCHOOOOM

GUYS?

BAD NEWS: I FOUND THE EVIL ROBOT!

GOOD NEWS: PRETTY SURE IT HAS NO RANGED CAPABILITY.

VRT

V-VASH VASH VASH

NEVERMIND! THERE IS NO GOOD NEWS!

BOOM

I GOT 'IM?

I GOT 'IM!

KTOOOM

D'HEY!

BOOM

UH, WHOOPS.

WHYYY?

I THINK I *KILLED* ROBO.

HE'S USED TO IT.

FWAM

S'OKAY. I GOT 'IM.

SEE?

This is less than ideal.

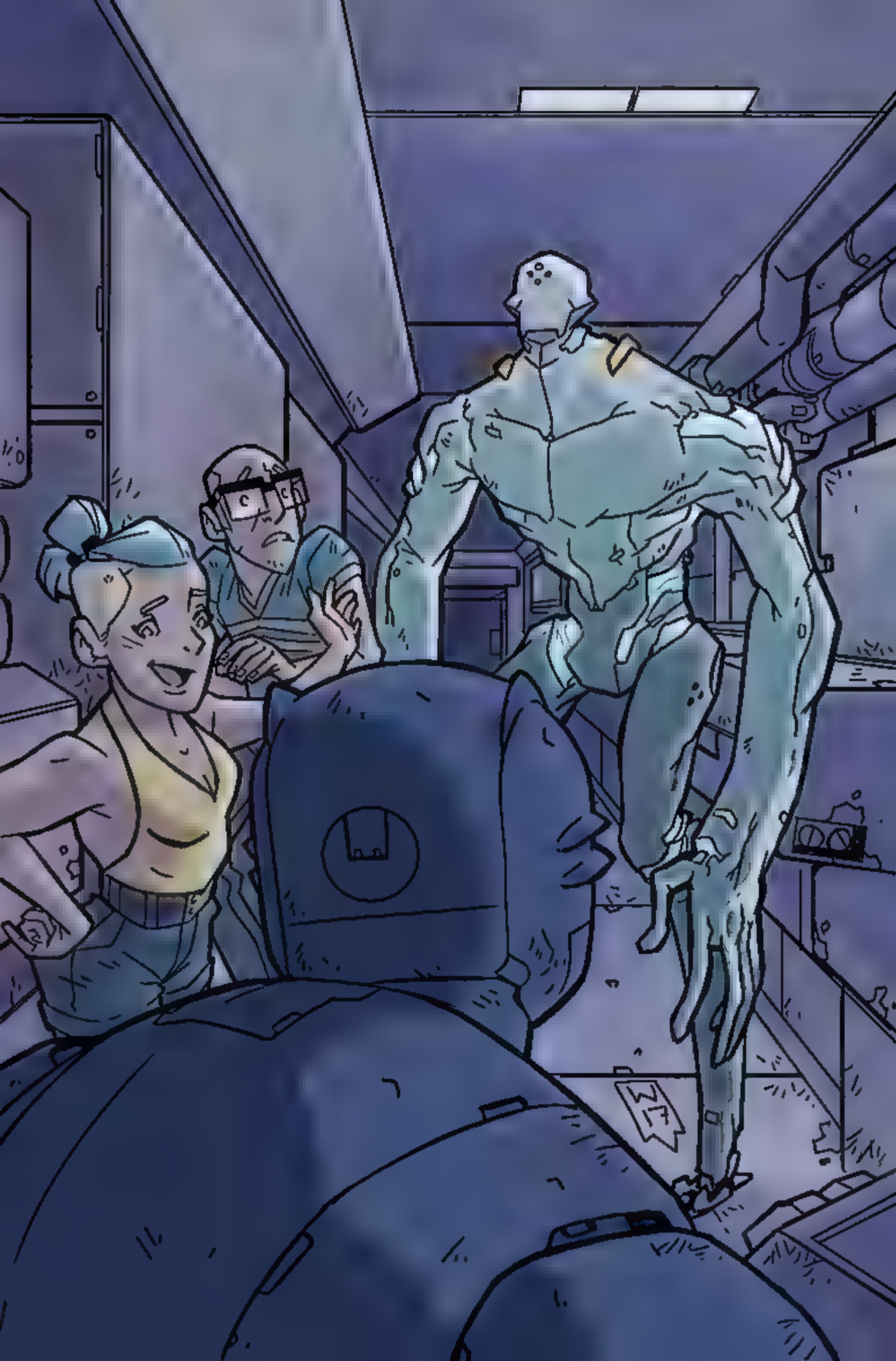
Yet you MAY prove useful to HELSINGARD.

COOL.

HELSINGARD.

HEY, DID YOU SAVE OUR *LIVES* OR DID YOU SAVE OUR LIVES TO KILL US *YOURSELF?*

FWRK?



HASHIMA ISLAND, 10:10AM

WHAT HIT ME...?

Praetorian Series.

FOURTH generation of my PERSONAL guard.

HELSINGARD!

I see age has done NOTHING to diminish your habit of stating the OBVIOUS.

Pity.

UM, SO, WE KINDA *TEAMED UP* WITH HELSINGARD.

WHEN?!

WHILE YOU WERE REBOOTING.

IS THIS *REALLY* HELSINGARD THOUGH?

*IT'S A **CLONE** OF HELSINGARD'S **BRAIN.***

NONSENSE. There is only ONE Helsingard.

*YEAH, AND **ALL** THE CLONES SAY THAT.*

THIS ONE'S FROM PROJECT DAEDALUS. THEY WERE IN CHARGE OF ACQUIRING HELSINGARD'S BIO-TECH. CYBERNETICS. CLONING.

THEN THEY HOOKED ONE OF HELSIE'S SPARE BRAINS INTO THEIR INTRANET TO HELP WITH THEIR RETRO-ENGINEERING. IT TOOK OVER THE AGENCY INSTEAD.

HE POPS UP EVERY COUPLE OF DECADES. AND I HATE HIM.

Is that any way to speak to the construct that saved your functions?

NOT SURE IT COUNTS AS SAVING ME WHEN IT'S FROM YOUR OWN ROBOT DEATH SQUAD.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE ANYWAY?

Simple. I came to harvest the island's stores of nuclear material in the wake of ULTRA's demise.

Upon arrival my personal tactical network was hacked by what I believe to be a machine intelligence TRAPPED in this place.

My Praetorian Guard SUCCUMBED in the time it took to recognize the attack and DISABLE the network.

It is curious that YOU were not SIMILARLY afflicted.

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK A COMPUTER INTELLIGENCE WAS BEHIND THE HACK?

It explains YOUR arrival.

The hack must have reached the GLOBAL Daedalus network and ACTIVATED a number of my sleeper agents, yes?

THOSE WERE YOUR CYBORGS?

Of COURSE they are.

My FIFTH generation covert operatives are SO advanced you would NATURALLY assume them to be the work of a NON-human intelligence.

THAT brought you to HASHIMA because you already KNEW about the computer mind dwelling here.

And THAT is why YOUR personal network was offline BEFORE you landed.

We have already wasted too much time.

Collect your weapons. There are MORE Praetorians.

CERES REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS
BUDAPEST, HUNGARY
2:13AM

<I'M SORRY FOR CALLING SO *LATE*, DIRECTOR.>

<NO. YOU DID THE RIGHT THING.>

<THEY JUST BARGED *IN* AND-->

<WHERE ARE THEY NOW?>

<THIS IS A SECURE *CERES* INSTALLATION.>

<YOU HAVE *NO* AUTHORITY HERE!>

SHE SEEMS TO THINK SHE'S IMPORTANT.

GET RID OF HER.

I AM DIRECTOR GENERAL FABIOLA GULATI AND I SPEAK *ENGLISH*.

GET RID OF ME *YOURSELF*.

FINE. *ASTRA* IS TAKING OVER THE *CERES* INVESTIGATION.

AND *YOU* ARE TRESPASSING.

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY
2:27AM

BAM
BAM
BAM

YOU *BETTER* BE THE END OF THE WORLD...

PHIL!

WHAT'S GOING ON?

SHUT UP. I JUST GOT OFF THE PHONE WITH GULATI.

WHAT TIME IS IT?

SHUT UP. SHE SAID ***CERES*** IS OFF THE CASE.

307

WAIT, WHAT? SAYS ***WHO?***

ANOTHER ***RED*** OUTFIT. ***ASTRA.***

NEVER ***HEARD*** OF 'EM.

GULATI THINKS THEY'RE COMING FOR ***US.***

COMING FOR US IN WHAT WAY?

SHE TOLD ME ***NOT*** TO BE ***HERE*** TO FIND OUT.

PACK.

THE FUTURE SITE OF THE TESLADYNE INSTITUTE
JORNADA DEL MUERTO, NEW MEXICO
6:30PM

I DON'T KNOW *WHY* YOU BOTHER CALLING.

YOU *KNOW* HIS HEADPHONE INBOX IS FULL.

DIDN'T EVEN *RING* THIS TIME.

I KNOW ROBO'S BEEN THROUGH *HELL* LATELY.

THE *NUKES*, THE *MEDIA*, HOLLOW EARTH, THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, LOSING TESLADYNE TO A MILITARIZED CABAL. THE PRESIDENT.

I GET THAT. I *DO*.

BUT MAN, JUST *DISAPPEARING* ON US?

KID'S NOT ANSWERING EITHER.

THAT IS *NO* WAY TO DEAL WITH IT.

WHERE *IS* EVERYONE?

BEING SMART ENOUGH TO *AVOID* DEALING WITH *THIS*.

HOA

CAN'T *BLAME* 'EM.

THERE'S GOT TO BE A WAY TO *CHANGE* ONE OF THESE RULES SO WE CAN GET CONSTRUCTION *STARTED* AGAIN.

WE'VE BEEN *OVER* THAT.

"PROPOSED CHANGES MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE VOTING COMMITTEE *NINETY DAYS* IN ADVANCE."

AND THEY CAN DELAY THE ***ACTUAL*** VOTE ***ANOTHER*** NINETY DAYS FROM THAT!

AND ***THEN*** THEY ***VOTE*** WHETHER OR NOT TO ***DISCUSS*** THE PROPOSALS AT ***ANOTHER*** MEETING WITHIN THE ***NEXT*** NINETY DAYS.

THREE LEVELS OF ***NOPE*** TO BLOCK ***ANY*** PROGRESS.

WHAT IF WE DON'T NEED TO ***CHANGE*** A RULING?

YEAH, SEE. RIGHT HERE!

YOU JUST NEED A SIMPLE MAJORITY VOTE TO ***OVERTURN*** A RULING.

FROM ***THERE*** WE CAN FORCE A VOTE TO OVERTURN ***ANY*** DECISION FROM THE ***PRIOR*** NINETY DAYS.

ANY MEMBER OF THE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION CAN CALL FOR AN ***EMERGENCY SESSION.***

BUT ***ROBO'S*** DISAPPEARED AND ***BRANSON'S*** THE ONE WHO SHUT US DOWN.

HE'S NOT ABOUT TO CALL A MEETING ***OR*** VOTE IN OUR FAVOR.

BAM

HASHIMA ISLAND, JAPAN
11:01AM

I'M SURE YOU'LL UNDERSTAND IF I'M SUSPICIOUS OF **EVERYTHING** YOU **SAY** AND **DO.**

It is TIRESOME but not unexpected.

THE THING IS, YOU TOOK OUT THAT PRAETORIAN IN **ONE** SHOT.

SO I'M **THINKING** YOU DON'T **NEED** OUR HELP TO DEAL WITH THE **REST.**

YES, my plasma lance can dispatch them handily, BUT charging the capacitor leaves me vulnerable to attack.

THAT is why I require you and your comrades. You are to act as DISTRACTIONS.

Now, what do you know of this computer intelligence?

NOT A CHANCE.

I am as LOATH to admit it as you, but we MUST work TOGETHER.

YEAH, TO STOP **YOUR** HIJACKED CYBORGS FROM KILLING **US.** EVERYTHING AFTER THAT IS **OFF** THE TABLE.

The greatest tragedy of your existence is the feeble mind attached to it.

FUNNY HOW THIS **FEEBLE** MIND KEEPS THWARTING **YOU.**

HEY, HERE'S A FUN ONE, **I'M** THE GUY WHO BROKE YOUR **AIRSHIP** BACK IN THE **EIGHTEEN-EIGHTIES.**

YEAH. FIGURE **THAT** ONE OUT WITH YOUR BIG, JUICY BRAIN.

AAAAHHHH!!

Do not move!

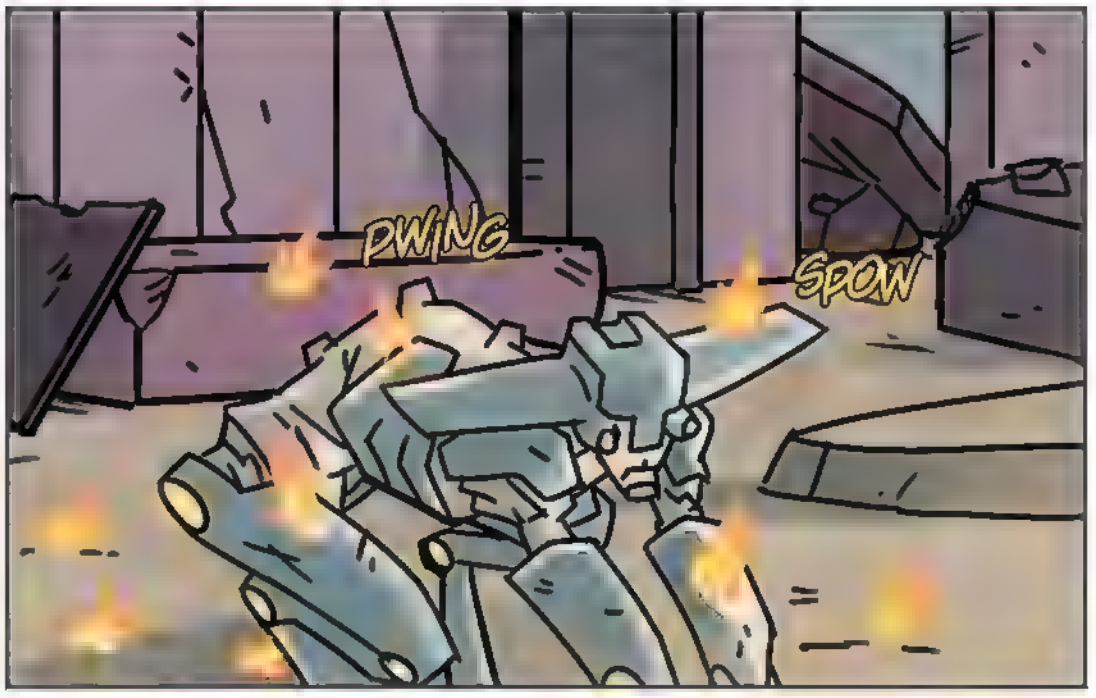
WHAM WHAM WHAM

I'LL TRY.

KCHOOM

ANOTHER ONE!

BRAKKA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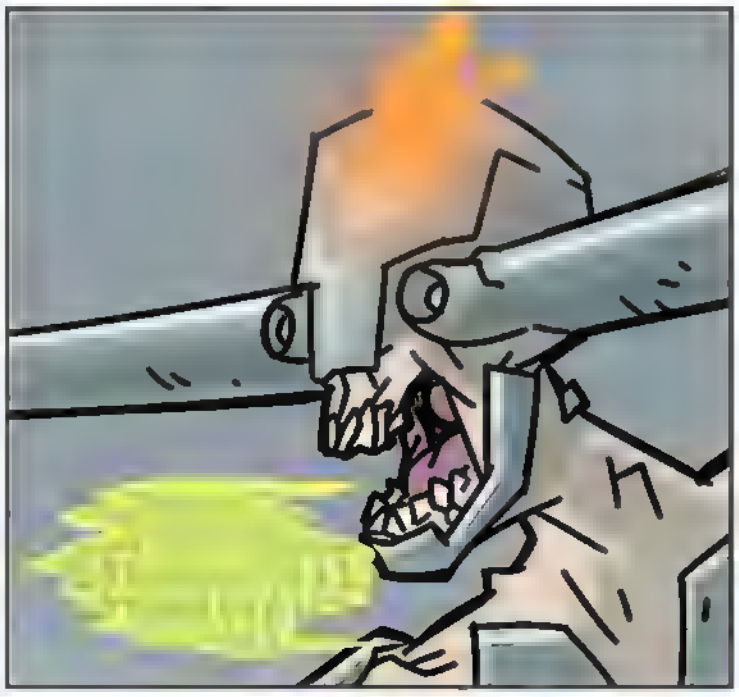
SPOW



BOOM
CHOOM

DAKKA
DAKKA
TOOMP

ZWARK

THANKS, UH, HELSINGARD?

WHYyyy...?

Must I accomplish EVERYTHING?

ZWAP

ZIK

ZAK

KRA-HOOOM

You had ONE job, Atomic Robo.

SO DID YOU.

WHERE'D HE GO?

To regroup with the OTHERS, I expect.

HOW MANY OTHERS?

TWO fewer than BEFORE.

THIS TEAM UP WAS YOUR IDEA, FRANKENSTEIN.

Yes, BUT asymmetrical exchange of information was NOT.

FINE, BUT YOU FIRST.

WHY DO YOU HAVE AN ARMY OF COVERT CYBORGS OUT IN THE WORLD?

To SURVEIL prominent figures in government, science, industry, AND media.

I suspect they've become a USELESS strategic vector.

Now YOU. Tell me about the Hashima COMPUTER.

IT'S FROM THE COLD WAR. IT WENT **ROGUE** AND STOCKPILED HUNDREDS OF NUKES IN SECRET.

I **STOPPED** IT FROM USING THEM.

IT'S AWAKE **AGAIN.** I'M HERE TO **DISMANTLE** IT FOR **GOOD.**

You mean to KILL it?

Barbaric.

ALREADY **DID** ONCE. THIS TIME I'LL MAKE IT **STICK.**

CALL IT WHAT YOU WANT, I'M **TIRED** OF THE WORLD BEING **HAUNTED** BY **RELICS** THAT CAN **DESTROY** IT. I'M NOT LEAVING THIS ISLAND UNTIL **IT'S** TORN APART OR **I** AM.

You're forgetting that you need my help. Suppose I should REFUSE?

THEN WE MIGHT AS WELL FIGHT IT OUT **RIGHT NOW** AND LET THE PRAETORIANS FINISH THE WINNER.

Is he always so NEEDLESSLY dramatic?

UH, NOT *USUALLY,* NO.

This is ABSURD. We can fight one another to the DEATH when we are certain the world is NOT about to be reduced to radioactive ASH.

TESLADYNE INSTITUTE
JORNADA DEL MUERTO, NM
5:12PM

HE'S *GOTTA* PICK UP.

WHAT IF HE DOESN'T?

HE'S *GOTTA.* IT'S HIS PERSONAL LINE.

SPACEX
HAWTHORNE, CA
6:12PM

DOO DEE DOO DOO DOO DEE DOO

MISTER MUSK?

CAN WE CALL YOU *ELON?*

WHO AM I TALKING TO?

DOCTOR ABASI AND DOCTOR LANG.

FROM *TESLADYNE.*

DID *ROBO* GIVE YOU THIS NUMBER?

IT'S ONLY SUPPOSED TO BE FOR *EMERGENCIES.*

IT *IS* AN EMERGENCY, ELON!

LET'S STICK WITH *MISTER MUSK* FOR NOW.

WELL YOU SEE, *MISTER MUSK*, WHAT WITH ONE THING AND ANOTHER, *MISTER BRANSON* HAS STOPPED OUR CONSTRUCTION.

NOISE VIOLATIONS?

YEAH. HOW'D YOU KNOW?

JUST A *GUESS.* WE HAD TO DELAY BREAKING GROUND ON SOLARCITY BY MONTHS TO COMPLY WITH THE *CC&RS.*

BRANSON CAN BE A *STICKLER.*

HE REALLY CAN. *THAT'S* WHY WE CALLED YOU.

WELL, I'M NOT SURE THERE'S ANYTHING I COULD--

GLAD YOU ASKED! JUST CALL FOR AN *EMERGENCY MEETING* OF THE HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION TO REVIEW RECENT BUSINESS.

I *DON'T* REALLY--

MY *SCHEDULE'S* PRETTY--

AND *THEN* VOTE WITH TESLADYNE TO *OVERTURN* THE RULING.

WE CAN DO THE *WHOLE* THING OVER THE *PHONE.*

OR, *ANOTHER* THING WE CAN DO OVER THE PHONE IS *RADICALLY ALTER* THE TERMS OF YOUR *LICENSE* FOR THE *TESLA* NAME.

I JUST *HAPPEN* TO HAVE THE CONTRACT IN FRONT OF ME.

I GOTTA TELL YOU, *ELON,* THIS IS A *SWEETHEART* OF A DEAL ROBO GAVE YOU.

BE A *SHAME* IF SOMETHING *HAPPENED* TO IT.

HASHIMA, JAPAN
11:28AM

THERE. UP AHEAD.

THAT'S THE ENTRANCE.

If the computer intelligence has a SHRED of self-preservation, then I should think it gathered the Praetorians below to AMBUSH us.

AGREED.

YOU TWO STAY UP HERE.

YOU SHOULDN'T SEE ANY PRAETORIANS, BUT STICK TO **COVER** ALL THE SAME.

STRANGE is it not? Working together after all these years.

YEAH, WELL. MUTUALLY ASSURED **DESTRUCTION** MAKES FOR STRANGE BEDFELLOWS.

ANOTHER option presents itself.

EITHER of us could RE-ACTIVATE his personal network, SUCCUMB to the computer intelligence, and certainly DOOM the other.

TOO RISKY.

WE DON'T KNOW IF CONSCIOUSNESS WOULD **SURVIVE** THE EXPERIENCE AND **NEITHER** OF US IS CRAZY ENOUGH TO RISK **ANNIHILATION** TO FIND OUT.

You forget the INDOMITABLE will of Helsingard overcame death ITSELF.

The Hashima machine will prove a mere TRIFLE.

OH, C'MON.

KTANG

KTONG

KLONG

JUST ONCE COULD YOU NOT BE ABSURDLY EVIL?

KWAM

GUESS NOT.

KTONG

BLANG

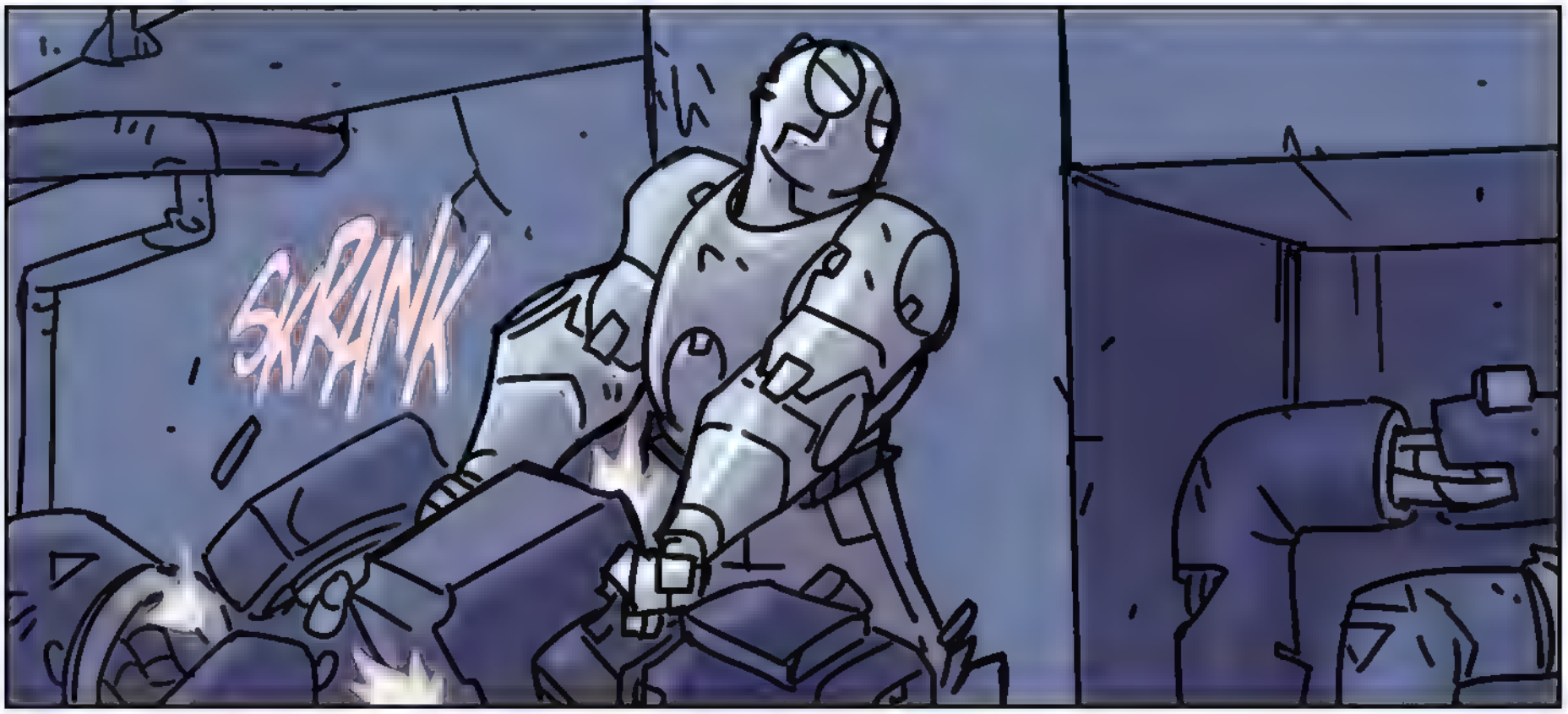
KCHOOM

CHOOM

I BET YOU SAY THAT TO ALL THE GIRLS.

FWEE

NOPE.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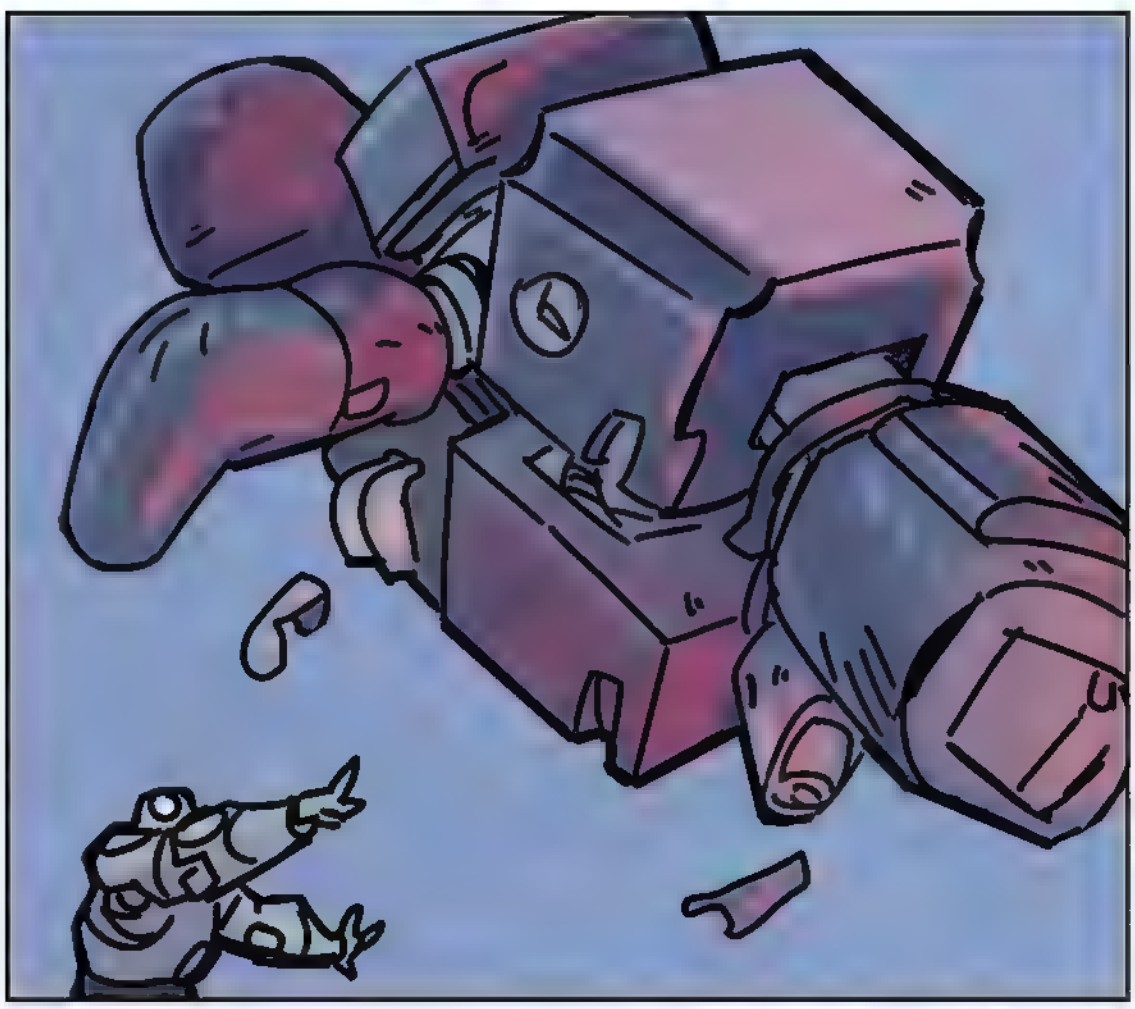

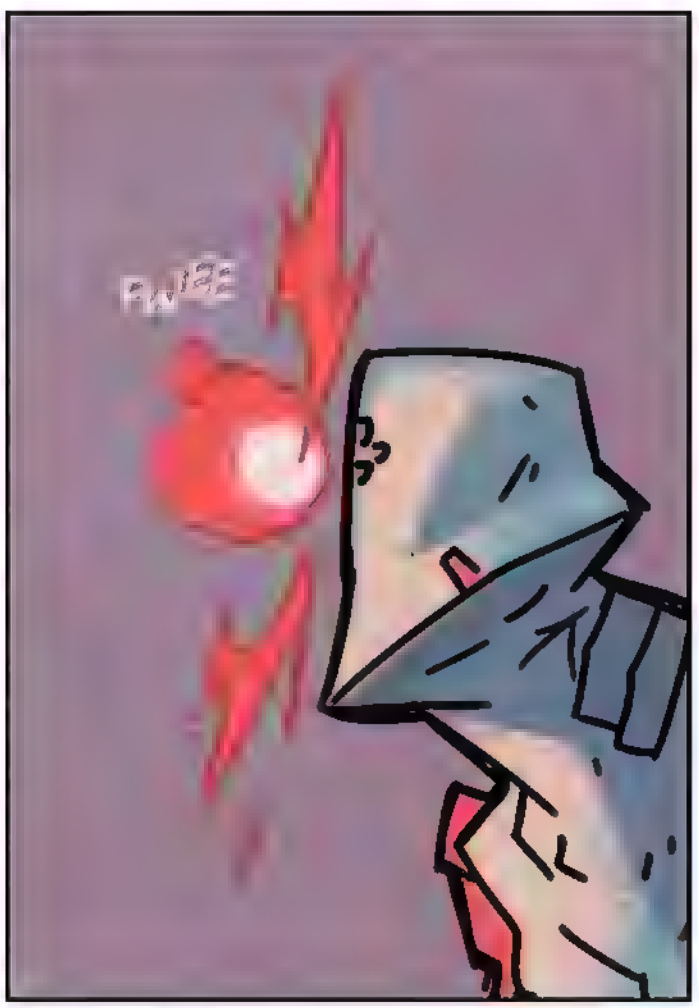
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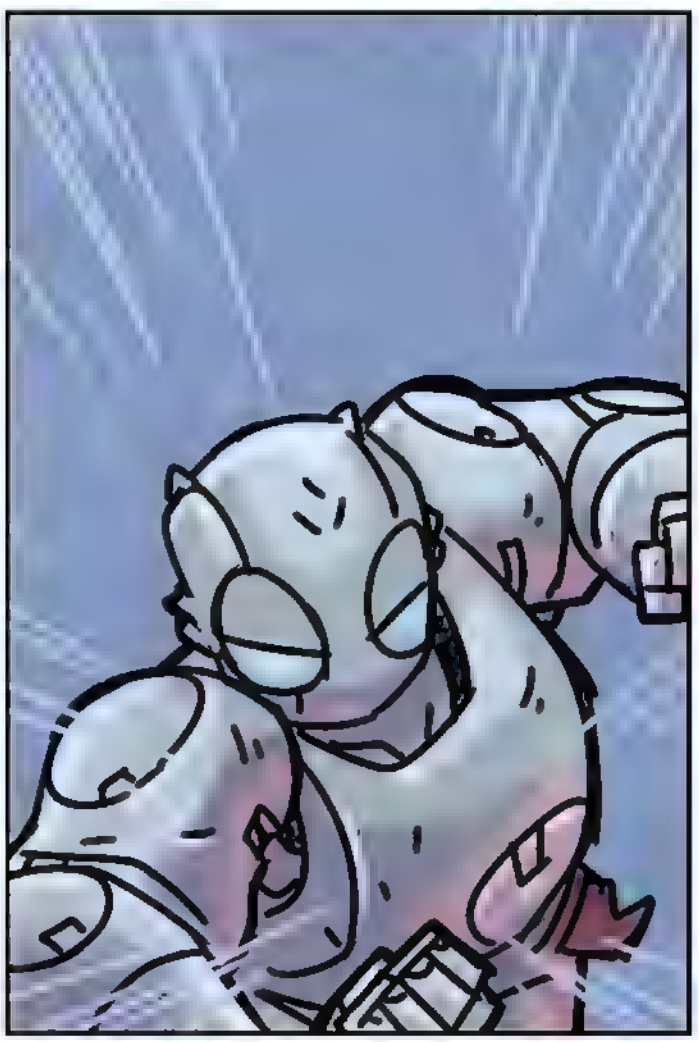
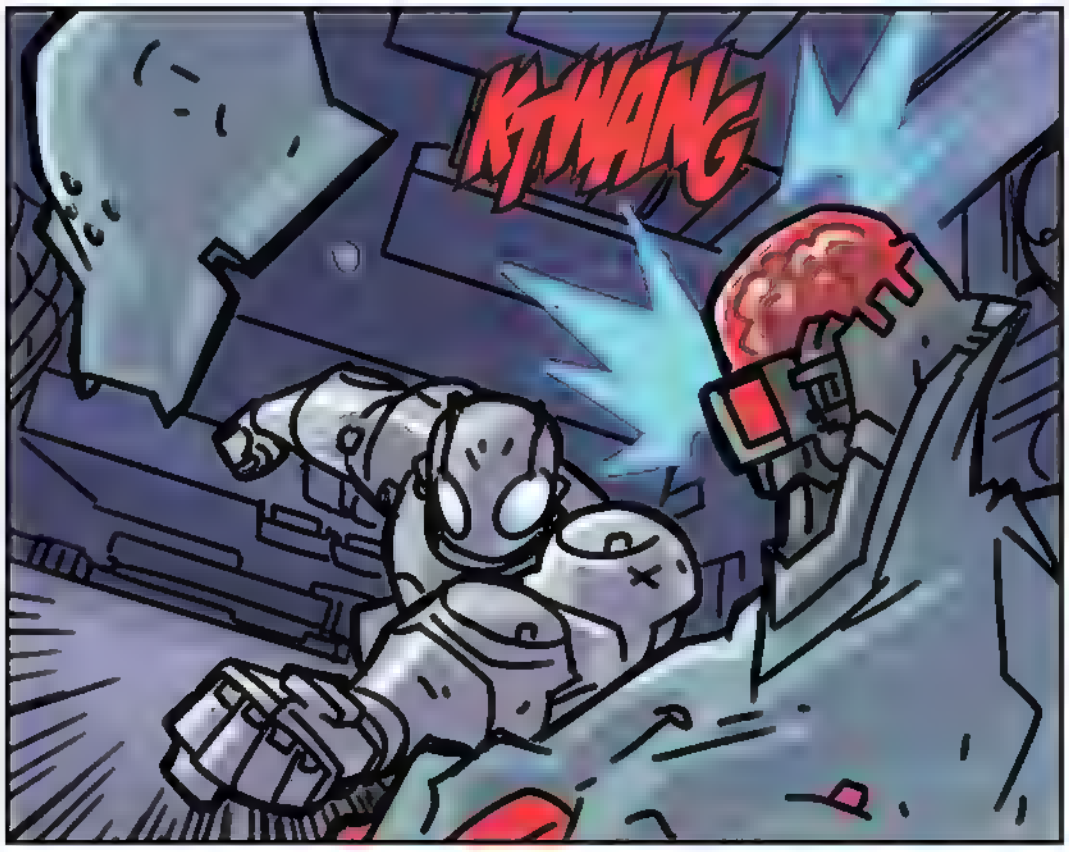
WRANG

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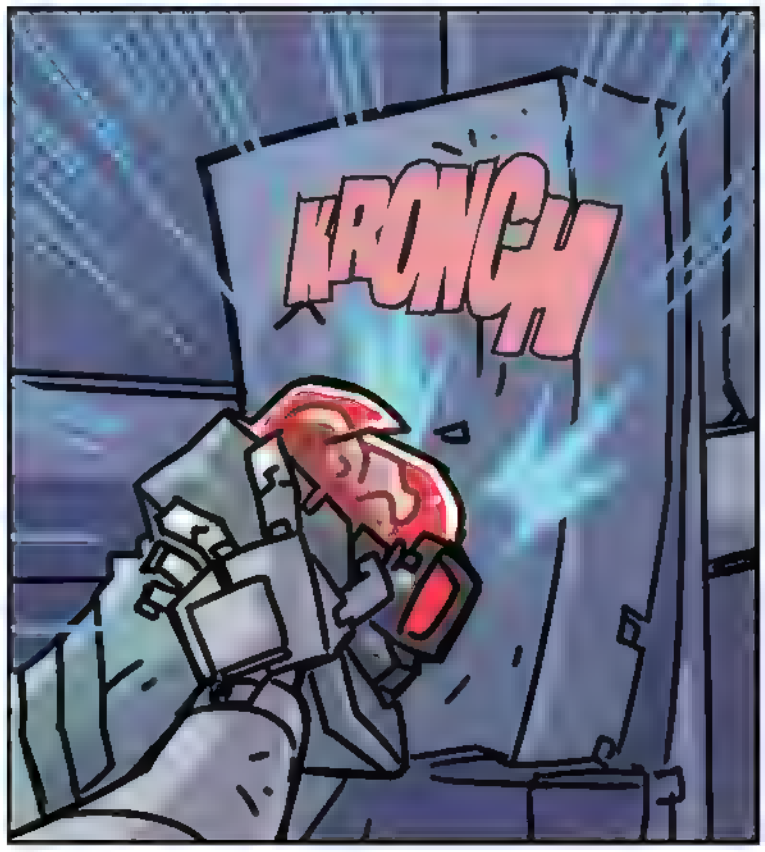
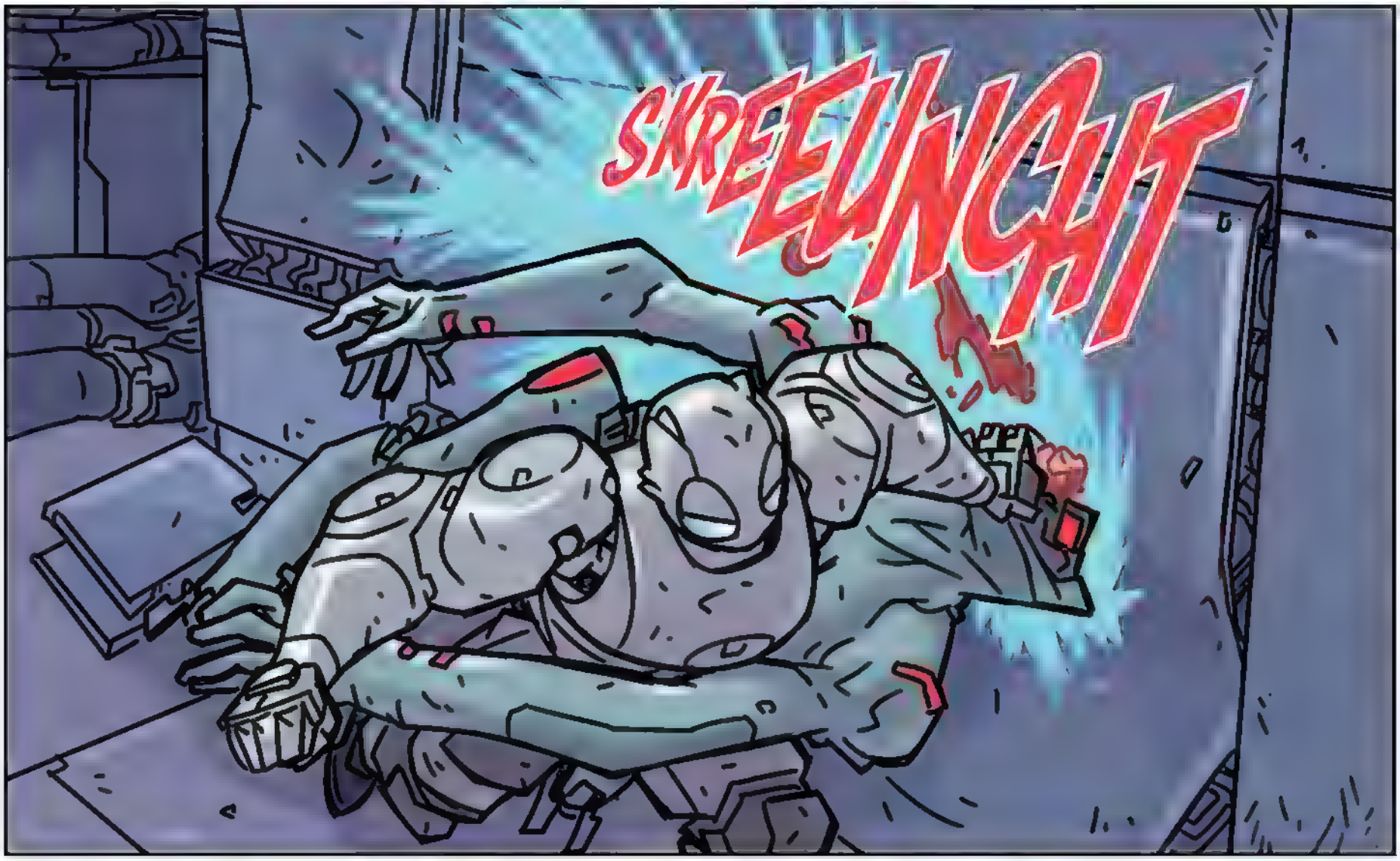

KRONCH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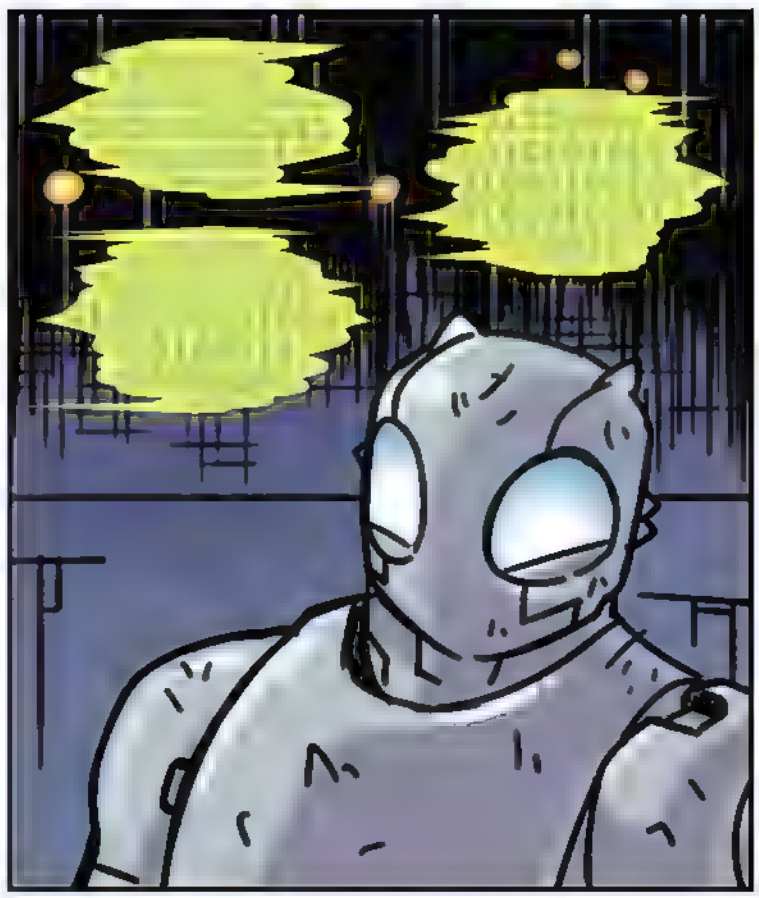
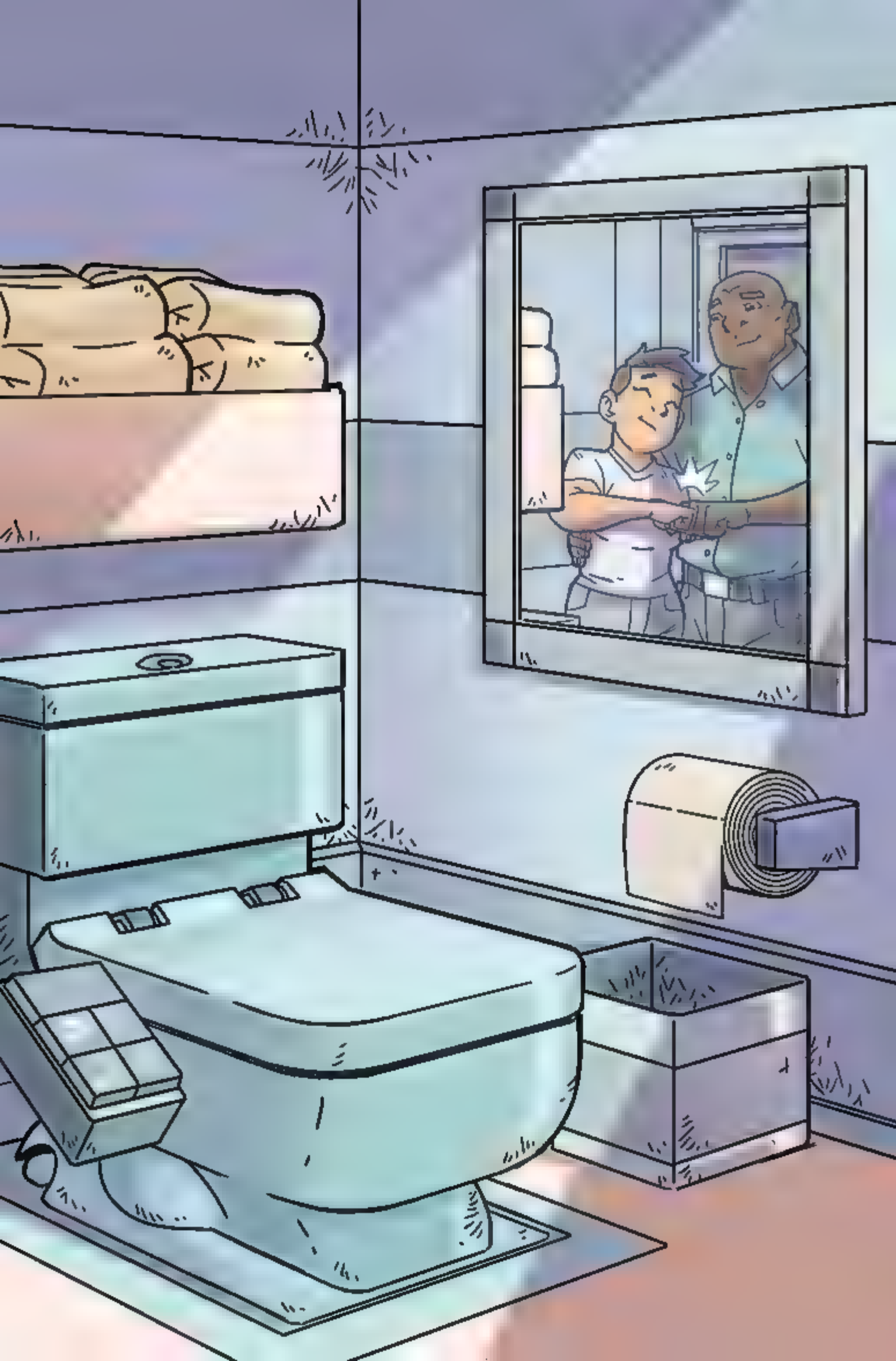


WELL? WHO'S NEXT?
I can see EVERYTHING from here.
No, no. That vessel is DEAD.
I have integrated into a GREATER machine.
A machine without LIMITS.
And YOU, Robo.
You are so SMALL.
And your friends so FRAGILE.



HASHIMA ISLAND, 11:33AM

HOW LONG'S HE BEEN *DOWN* THERE?

DUNNO.

S'BEEN QUIET. THAT'S *GOOD*, RIGHT?

DUNNO.

You were RIGHT to hide the truth of this place. This slumbering giant.

It sleeps, yet it does not REST.

Its billion eyes still SEE.

Its billion hands still WORK.

And it DREAMS.

It dreams of a THINKING universe.

YOU DON'T SEEM TOO *WORRIED* ABOUT IT.

WITH ANY LUCK, WE'LL BE *DEAD* SOON EITHER WAY.

YOU'RE A *REAL* RAY OF *SUNSHINE,* DOCTOR FISHER.

HAPPINESS IS JUST A CHEMICAL DISTRACTION.

This mindless, chaotic cosmos will be given PURPOSE!

It will become HELSINGARD.

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY
4:47AM

THAT'S *GOT* TO BE A GLITCH. ROBO'S HEART JUST SPIKED FOR *SIX HUNDRED PERCENT* OF ITS THEORETICAL MAXIMUM OUTPUT.

Do you still imagine you can ESCAPE?

TRYIN' TO.

Y'KNOW, I *GET* THAT THINGS ARE MESSED UP AT HOME.

AND, OKAY, *EVERYTHING* IS HORRIBLE ALL THE TIME *PLUS* THERE'S SECRET ROBOT BODY SNATCHERS AND *MAYBE* WORLD WAR THREE.

BUT *NIHILISM'S* FOR *TEENAGERS.*

YOU'RE AN ACTION SCIENTIST. *ACT* LIKE IT!

MOVE!

KCHOOM

SPLUK

SPUH

PFEH

FOLEY?

Searcning...

Facial Recognition: 23%

Searcning...

Facial Recognition: 7%

Searching...

Facial Recognition: 14%

BZZ RR

What do you expect to accomplish?

I ALREADY **TOLD** YOU.

THIS IS A **GIANT** MODULAR FACTORY DESIGNED TO STRIPMINE THE COSMOS FOR COMPUTATIONAL STRATA.

I'M GOING TO PROGRAM IT TO DISASSEMBLE ITSELF.

You MUST realize the futility of this plan.

My Praetorians will catch you LONG before you reach a terminal.

THEY CAN TRY.

You are TRAPPED in here. Your defeat is INEVITABLE.

YEAH, I GET THAT A LOT.

GET AWAY FROM HER, YOU *GLITCH!*

Target Acquisition...

Searching...

BWUH?

SHH.

CAN YOU WALK?

BUH

LET'S TAKE THAT AS A *NO.*

GRANTED, YOUR GOONS WILL RIP ME TO SHREDS.

BUT.

NOT IF THEY MISS.

That will not stop them.

THAT'S FINE.

SKREEE

MUD'S ALMOST *DRY* SO MY CAMOUFLAGE IS ALMOST *GONE.*

LET'S GIVE 'IM A *DIVERSION.*

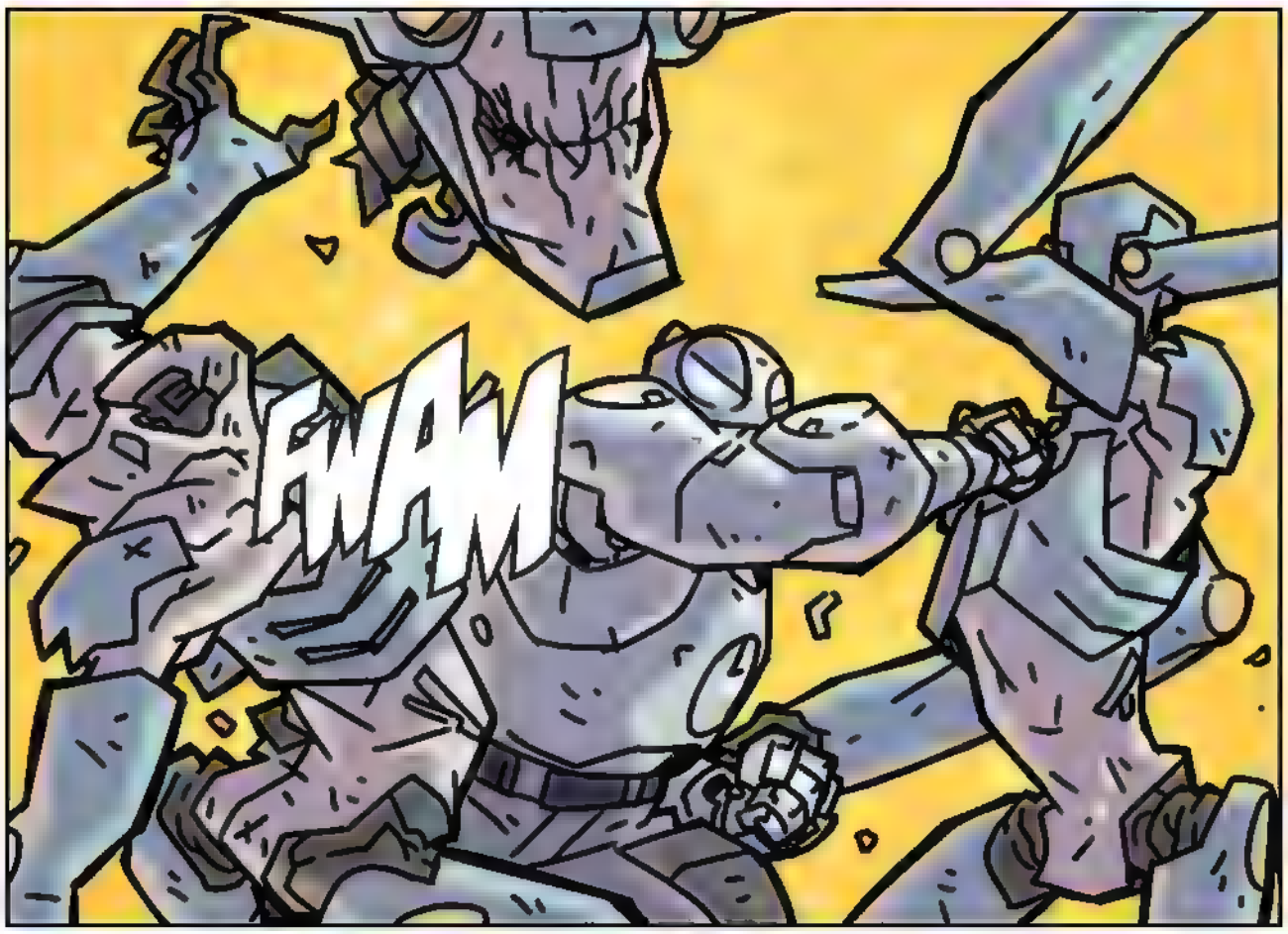
BZZR!

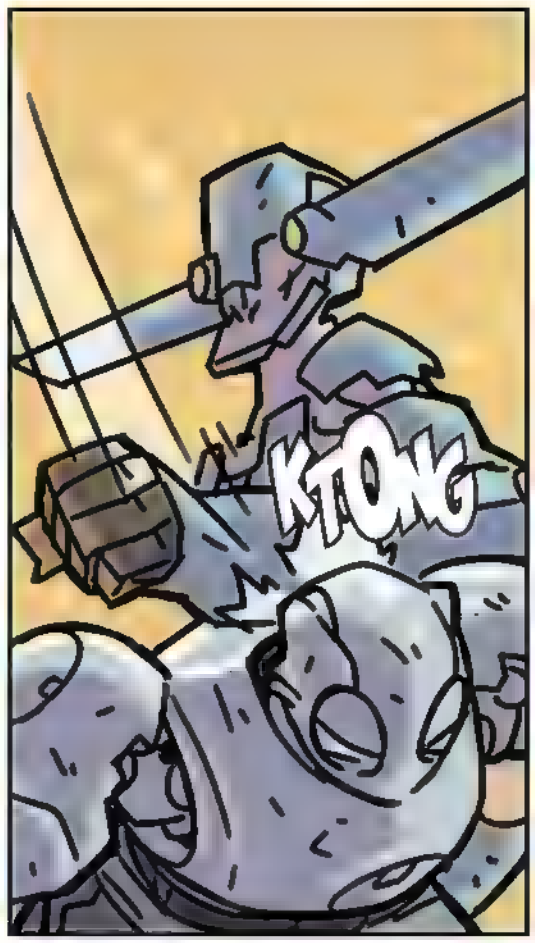
BWUH

HANG IN THERE.

GUESS THE EVIL ROBOTS HAD TO GET HERE *SOMEHOW.*

SKRONCHTOOOM


FWAM


KTONG

KTANG

That's enough.
For now.

OH, GREAT.

HE'S HOLO-PROJECTING.

Even NOW my consciousness is EXPANDING through ten million TONS of circuitry and machines.

It is GLORIOUS, and yet a mere PRELUDE of what is to come.

Oh, the giant RESISTS. It dreams of being whole once more and pushing out the invader Helsingard.

All QUITE futile. CHILDISH really.

ALL things submit to Helsingard in the end. That is a lesson, I think, even YOU are learning at last.

Do you REMEMBER what you said?

You would not leave this place until IT was torn apart or YOU were?

Which do you think it will be?

I'D LIKE TO ANSWER WITH A QUESTION.

As you like.

WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENED TO MY DRONES?

FWZZ

"SEE I DIDN'T KNOW **WHAT** TO EXPECT WHEN WE GOT HERE.

"THE FACILITY MIGHT'VE BEEN **SEALED** UP.

"OR DEFENDED BY WHO **KNOWS** WHAT.

"**ONE** PLAN IS NOTHING. **TWO** PLANS IS A PLAN.

"THE **DRONES** ARE HERE TO DO THE JOB IN CASE **I** COULDN'T."

SO, I'M **STALLING** YOU.

It's... slipping I'm...

YEAH, THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN **TEN MILLION TONS** OF BRAIN STARTS EATING ITSELF.

BZZ RR

UH, OF COURSE, I'M IN THE BRAIN TOO.

This beautiful dream will you

SWEET

HORSEFEATHERS!

FWERNK

FOLEY. YOU HEAR ME?
FEEL SICK.
YOU HIT YOUR HEAD. DO YOU REMEMBER WHERE YOU ARE?
WRR WRR PFFH
KRAK!
KRK!
MISSION. ROBOTS.
GOOD ENOUGH.
S'NOISE?
WE'RE GONNA GET YOU OUT OF HERE. YOU'RE GONNA BE OKAY.
JUST AS SOON AS I FIGURE OUT HOW THIS THING GOES UP.
SKREEEE
WE'RE SLIPPING, WE'RE SLIPPING.
VSHOOO
C'MON!

PLAN B INCLUDES AN EXIT STRATEGY NEXT TIME.

VWOOVWWRRRWR

UH. BUT MIRACULOUS RESCUE WORKS TOO.

WHO'S FLYING THAT THING?

KRONCH-PLOOSH

HI, BERNARD.

INTAKE

ROBO? UH, HANG ON.

THIS TIME I DEFINITELY GOT IT.

BLRBLRBLRBL

I DON'T GOT IT.

INTAKE

TRY IT NOW.

TK

SHOOO

RRUMBLE

JUST CLEAR THE BUILDINGS!

VROOOSH

KACHOOM

skeee

CHOOM

KA-BOOM

FUTURE SITE OF TESLADYNE INSTITUTE
JORNADA DEL MUERTO, NEW MEXICO

TUNK

WISH WE HAD A *PICTURE* OF BRANSON'S MUG WHEN WE TOLD HIM WE HAD THE VOTES TO *END* THE WORK STOPPAGE.

IF ONLY!

I'D HANG A FRAMED COPY IN *EVERY* ROOM.

YES.

MAKE IT THE COMPANY LOGO.

CAN'T WAIT TO GET OUT OF THIS *HALF-FINISHED* GARAGE AND INTO A *REAL* PLACE.

I LIKED *PARTS* OF IT.

PARTS, YEAH. IT WAS NICE TO JUST *UNPLUG* FOR A WHILE.

BOOM

THE HELL IS *THAT?!*

WHOOOOOSH

WHAT *HAPPENED* TO YOU GUYS?

IS THAT A *HOVERJET?*

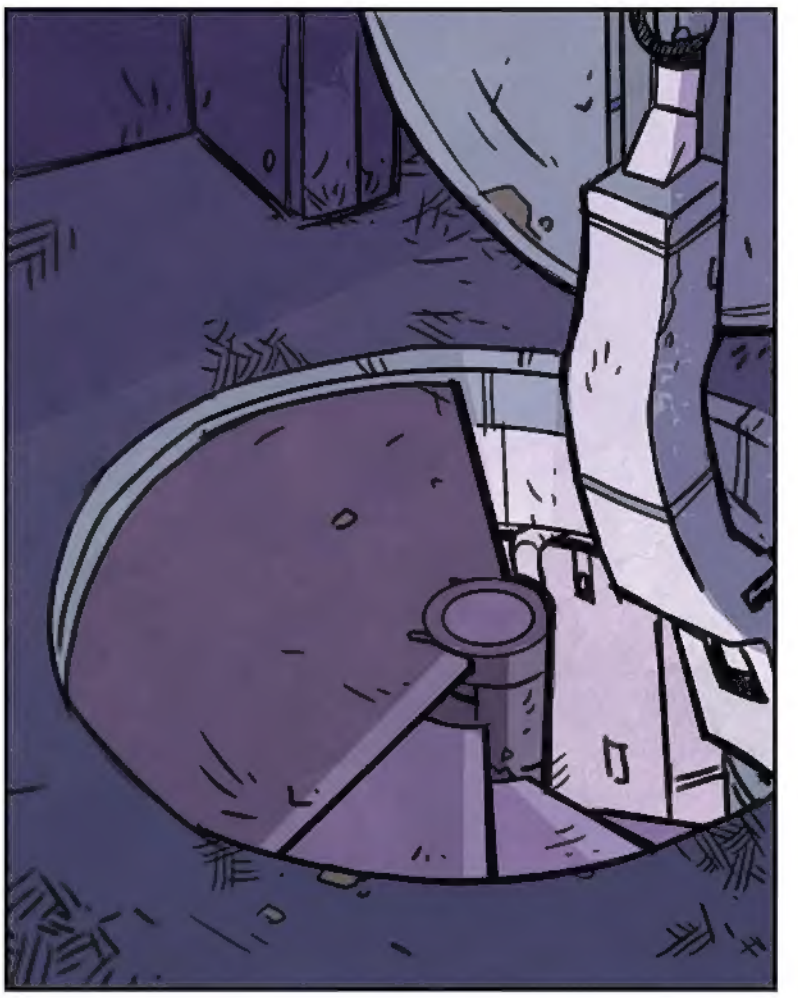
HELSINGARD TRIED TO RAID THE HASHIMA STOCKPILE.

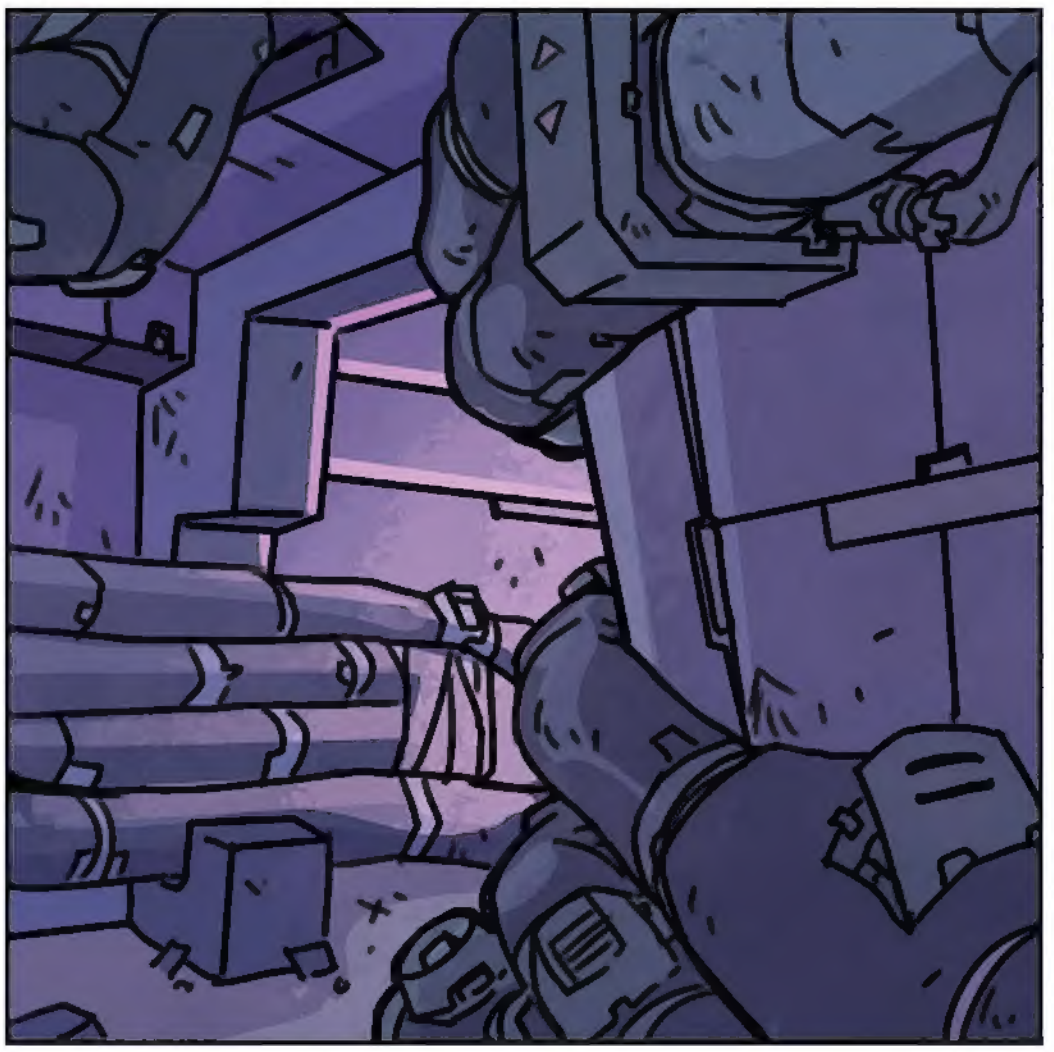
BUT SOME **REMNANT** OF **ALAN** WAS STILL IN THERE. PROBABLY SOMETHING WE **STIRRED** UP WHEN WE BUILT MY HEART.

ALAN HACKED HELSINGARD'S GOONS, THE HACK WENT **GLOBAL**, AND ACTIVATED A **LEGION** OF SECRET CYBORG INFILTRATORS.

WORLD-WIDE **PANIC**, BRINK OF **WAR**, ETCETERA.

BUT I **THINK** WE FIXED IT.





ULTRABLACK SITE "OMPHALOS"
GAKONA, AK

YOU WANTED TO SEE ME, SIR?

BROOKS. COME IN.

EXCELLENT WORK COLLECTING THE BODIES FROM ***CERES.***

THANK YOU, SIR. ANY SIGN ***WHY*** THEY'VE GONE ***INERT?***

NONE. BUT IT ***COINCIDES*** WITH HASHIMA SINKING. I'VE SENT A TEAM.

STONE

HUMANITY IS UNDER ***SIEGE,*** BROOKS. BIOMEGA. VAMPIRES. PARASITIC GEOMETRY. ***SIMULACRA.*** WHO KNOWS WHAT ***ELSE.***

M12 AND ULTRA WERE HUMANITY'S WALLS OF DEFENSE.

THE THING ABOUT WALLS IS THEY ***CRUMBLE*** AND ***FALL.***

ASTRA WERE THE WEAPONS OF THE HINDU GODS.

THE *ASTRADHARI* WERE HUMANS WHO LEARNED THE ***SECRET*** INCANTATIONS TO ***WIELD*** THESE WEAPONS.

TELL ME, BROOKS.

AREN'T YOU ***TIRED*** OF WATCHING OUR WALLS ***CRUMBLE?***

It's been a week and everything is back to normal.

But not the old, weird normal.

Maybe I should start over.

Dr. Fisher has smiled more in the last week than he has since I met him!

Maybe it's the working toilets? Dr. Lang's sure happy about them anyway.

I know Dr. Abasi expected to be working by now, but surely getting to design your lab is the next best thing.

Robo's the only one I'm worried about. He went straight back to his garage and no one's seen him since.

He's not as bad as he was. I've got him answering texts now! He signs them with the robot emoji like we won't know it's him without it.

But still he needs to get out of that cave.

He says he will. He just needs to finish the repairs on himself and the drones. I guess we'll see.

THAT SHOULD DO IT.

GUSSIE, BINGO.

WELCOME TUPPY BACK TO THE WORLD OF THE LIVING.

GOOD AFTERNOON, DOCTOR TURING.

NO, UH. DOCTOR TURING... HE...UM.

HE ISN'T. HE'S...

...I'M ROBO.

HELLO, ROBO.

I AM THE AUTOMATIC LEARNING ALGORITHM NETWORK.

BUT YOU MAY CALL ME ALAN.

THE END